

Calendar in the Heavens

Description

Calendar in the Heavens

New Years, New Moons, Passover

and Pentecost

Happy To Be An April Fool

SUBJECT:

Jesus said,

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, **but to fulfill**. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, **one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, TILL ALL BE FUL-FILLED**. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 5:17-19

GEM THOUGHTS:

“And what **was done in type** in the ministration of the earthly sanctuary **is done in reality in the ministration** of the heavenly sanctuary.” *The Great Controversy*, p. 420.

“In like manner, the types which relate to the second advent **must be fulfilled AT THE TIME POINTED OUT IN THE SYMBOLIC SERVICE**. Under the Mosaic system the cleansing of the sanctuary, or the great day of Atonement, occurred on the tenth day of the seventh Jewish month (Leviticus 16:29, 34), ... So it was believed that Christ, our great High Priest, would appear to purify the earth by the destruction of sin and sinners, and to bless His waiting people with immortality. The tenth day of the seventh month, the great day of Atonement, the time of the cleansing of the sanctuary, which in the year 1844 fell upon the twenty-second of October, was regarded as the time of the Lord’s coming. This was in harmony with the proofs already presented that the 2300 days would terminate in the autumn, and the conclusion seemed **IRRESISTIBLE**.” *The Great Controversy*, pp. 399,400.

STUDY THOUGHTS:

Would it not seem strange for inspiration to base an “**IRRESISTIBLE**” “conclusion” on a time which no longer had any significance after the cross, and had lost all meaning?

Likewise, why was the Holy Spirit poured out upon the disciples on the very day of Pentecost if it also had been nailed to the cross?

And lastly, why are many Christians today going to be holding unification and prayer vigils which will be concluding on Pentecost, at which time they are expecting an outpouring of the Spirit, if they don't think God will respect the day?

INTRODUCTION

In 2005 many Christians will be celebrating Easter Sunday on March 27, according to the calculations and command of the Roman Catholic Church. What is significant about this is that the day they will be celebrating will be about a month *before* the time of Passover – the actual time when Christ died and was resurrected. This discrepancy doesn't make much difference to most of the professed Christians, for, after all, they are already accepting Rome's declarations concerning Sunday keeping, and many other ordinances, including celebrating as Christ's birthday a day which is not even close, that is, December 25. Neither are those who lead out in these things embarrassed by them, as they should be, for they have for so long accepted the customs and traditions of men instead of the plain and simple declarations of God that their consciences have been dulled to the point that they do not seem to care what God thinks about the matter.

Those who have determined that March 27 is to be the date to memorialize Christ's resurrection are using the new moon on March 11-12 as the beginning of the year. They will be totally disregarding the Biblical method for determining the beginning of a new year, and, therefore, totally disregarding the actual God-given time of the year when He suffered, died, and was resurrected. As that new moon in March is about ten days before the Vernal Equinox, it will not signify the start of the new year because it is actually the last new moon of the year ending at the Equinox. The next new moon on April 9-10 will be the first new moon after the Equinox, and thus the first one in the new year.

Yet millions who profess to take the Bible as their guide, and not a few Seventh Day Adventists among them, will be bowing down at the command of Rome in this regard. We have recently passed January 1, 2005 (the western world's New Year's Day – also instituted by the Church of Rome). As it fell on Sabbath, many SDA churches had special prayers for the new year (sic). But will they do the same when heaven's new year comes in the spring? Will they celebrate the real day of Christ's resurrection as pointed out in the symbolic service when the true Passover season comes in the month following the one being recognized at Rome's command? The really important question is, Do they feel the need to do it correctly, or do they think that any lame offering will be accepted? Grace is given to bring us up to the standard, not as an excuse to avoid the truth in practice.

In Rome's concluding that March 27 is Easter, they have also declared May 15 to be the Day of Pentecost – again, one month early. Yet many will be having prayer vigils which they will end on May 15 presuming it to be Pentecost, and will be awaiting an outpouring of the Spirit at that time. Those who do not care if the times they observe are correct or not, will not care if the spirit they receive is not of God's appointment. "Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off? Even as I have seen, **they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.**" Job 4:7, 8.

Therefore, in this study we will review both the correct method of determining God's holy Feast days, and their significance after the cross. The method shown here is the same used by the early Adventists to arrive at the conclusion that October 22 was the day of Atonement in 1844. For proof of this, see our study [Calendar In The Heavens – Oct. 22, 1844](#)

CALENDAR IN HEAVEN

NEW YEARS

“And God said, Let there be **lights** in the firmament of the heaven . . .; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and **years**: . . . And God made **two great lights**; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, And to **rule** over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.” Genesis 1:14-18.

Therein we see that within the course of the “two great lights” are the signposts, signals, for the rule of the **year**. They reveal this by means of their observable cycles.

The Hebrew word translated “year” (*shana*) comes from the root word *shahah*, which means: “to repeat, do again, change.” The cycle of the sun has four observable times each year when it may be said “to repeat, do again, change” – at the Spring and the Autumn Equinoxes, when the length of the day and the length of the night are equal at the earth’s Equator; at the Summer Solstice when the day is the longest of the year; and at the Winter Solstice when the day is the shortest of the year. In order to know which of these phenomena are used to determine the new years we need to go to the Word of the Creators of the heavens and the earth.

Shortly before the Lord delivered the Israelites from Egypt He told Moses,

“**This month** shall be unto you **the beginning of months**: it shall be the **first month of the year** to you.” Exodus 12:2.

By this we see that the **months** are inseparably linked with the **year**, and that they hold a certain prominence in God’s Calendar in the heavens in regards to the new years. Yet, as *both* the **sun** and the **moon** are to “be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and **years**,” we must look at the complete testimony involving these two silent witnesses in order to understand God’s method of reckoning the times of His endless cycles.

To determine which month was meant by “this month” we need to look at more of the story. Shortly before that time, during the seventh plague on Egypt,

“Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. . . .

“And the flax and the **barley** was smitten: for the **barley was in the ear**, and the **flax was bolted**. But the wheat and the rye were not smitten: for they were not grown up.” Exodus 9:23, 31, 32.

Observation tells us that barley is “in the ear,” and flax is “bolted” in the Spring, around the time of the Spring (Vernal) Equinox. Therefore, we see that God chose the Spring time and the observable sign in the heavens (the Spring Equinox – when the sun is seen “to repeat, do again, change” its cycle) to mark the end of the sun’s cycle into and through the summer and winter, and the beginning of a new cycle. It usually falls on March 21st, though occasionally it may occur on March 20th.

The sun, and its observable sign of the Spring Equinox, though, is only one of two signs in the heavens which are required to establish a new year – the other is the **moon** (as noted in Exodus 12:2, above). The cycle (phases) of the moon are of equal importance because they determine the day of the week on which the first day of the first month of the year begins – which is used for the counting of the days for the feast of that month, and for the counting of the days and months of the other feasts. The appearance of the new

(sickle-like) moon marks the beginning (first day) of a month, as we shall see. The question then is, In what relationship must the cycles of the sun and moon be in order for that to signal the arrival of the new years? Let's examine this.

As the sun only has **one** position each Spring at which it begins "to repeat, do again, change" its cycle around the time of the barley harvest (that being the Vernal Equinox), and the moon has **twelve** such repetitions in a slightly shorter number of days (354, as compared to 365 for the sun), we must look for a renewing lunar cycle which occurs in relation to the sun's renewing sign – the Vernal Equinox. The new moon occurring *before* the time of the Vernal Equinox would not be the *first* of a *renewing* cycle of the moon's yearly courses, but, rather, the *last* of a year's *concluding* cycle. Therefore, the only new moon cycle left would be the one which first appears *at* or *after* the Vernal Equinox.

The Spirit of Prophecy confirms this:

"The first of these festivals, the Passover, the feast of unleavened bread, occurred on Abib, **the first month** of the Jewish year, **corresponding to the last of March and the beginning of April** [that is, *after* the Vernal Equinox – March 20/21]." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 537. [brackets added]

It was from the attempted change in the time of the new year from March/April to January 1st where we get the saying "April fools." That is, in Europe, at the time the Catholic church had declared that they were changing the time of the new years (Daniel 7:25), when some of those in the countryside who were not aware of the declaration (or who had not accepted it as valid) came into the cities to celebrate the new years in the Spring, those who had bowed down to Rome's assumptions and had celebrated the new year in January referred to the others as "April fools." In this context, happy are those "April fools" who choose to follow God commandments, rather than man's.

Next, we need to understand how to recognize what makes the moon "new?"

NEW MOONS

SEEING IS BELIEVING

As simple observation has established, the **light** of the moon goes through her cycle of being partly visible, then fully visible, then being partly visible again, then not being visible at all, and then beginning the cycle all over again by being partly visible (new) again.

It is the **light** of the moon which is the determining factor here, because the moon is always there, regardless of whether or not she is visible. It is only the **light** of the moon that goes through *readily observable* phases and is thus given names (new, first quarter, full, last quarter, and waxing and waning). The phases of the **dark** (unlighted) part of the moon, though also going through phases, are not named, except the *conjunction*, which is also called the "Dark Moon." The Dark Moon is the time when the moon is so close to the sun in the sky that it cannot be seen even near sunset or sunrise, and may cover a period of 1 1/2 to 3 1/2 days. The actual (or approximate) middle of this period is known as the *conjunction*.

Historically, people speak of the first or last "quarter" of the moon, referring to one of her phases of **light**, rather than saying that the same manifestation is the first or last "quarter" of her **dark** phases. The same is true of the "full" moon – people, generally, do not call it the "not **dark**" (empty of darkness) moon.

The actual *conjunction*, itself, is not *readily* observable itself, as it is undetectable by mere observation, falling within the period of a few days when the light of the moon is not seen. Also, the

conjunction can fall any time of the day or night, while the first visible portion of the **light** of the moon can only occur on one particular night during each cycle, and is thus an observable “sign.”

The ancients used only the first **visible** phase of the moon to establish the first day of the month, and all of their calculations were used to determine such. Thus the term “new moon” originally meant the first **visible** light of the moon after its dark phase. Today, most of the times that are reported in newspapers and in scientific circles as being the time of the “new” moon are derived by calculations only, and are given in reference to the *conjunction* of the moon – the precise time when it is at its darkest – rather than when she first becomes **visible**. But, as the calculations of the *conjunctions* serve only to give us an idea of when to possibly expect the first **visible** sickle of **light**, we would do well to follow the injunction to

“Stand ... in the ways, and **see**, and ask for **the old paths**, where is **the good way**, and walk **therein**, and ... find rest for [our] souls” (Jeremiah 6:16),

in **looking for the first visible light** of the New Moon, and in using the modern marvels of mass and rapid communication for sharing this knowledge with others.

Next, we need to understand that the *day* of the New Moon (the first day of the month) begins with the evening it is first visible *after* the sun sets, and ends with the following sundown. The Bible states that the days begin with an “evening” and end with an “evening” (Leviticus 23:32). Though there are times when the moon appears sickle-like *before* the sun sets, such would not indicate the beginning of the *day* of the New Moon, nor the beginning of the new month, because the moon at such times is not in her **dominion** – **night**. Regarding the rulership (authority – dominion) of the sun and moon we read,

“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**: And let them be for **lights** in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made **two great lights**; the greater light [the sun] **to rule the day**, and the **lesser light [the moon] to rule the night**: he made the stars also.” Genesis 1:14-16 [brackets added]

The Hebrew word therein translated “seasons” means “appointed times,” and is the same word which is used when speaking of the feasts of the Lord, as it is written,

“These are the **feasts** of the LORD, even **holy convocations**, which ye shall proclaim in their **seasons** .” Leviticus 23:4.

The Hebrew word translated “rule” in those verses of Genesis 1 means to “have dominion.” In the day time, the sun has dominion (rulership), and the moon does not. In the nighttime, the moon has dominion, and the sun does not. Therefore, for the moon to exercise her “dominion” (rulership – authority), and thereby establish the beginning of a new month (the *day* of the New Moon), she must be in her own dominion – **in the nighttime, after** the sun has gone down, and not before.

PASSOVER

Now that we understand how to determine the beginning of the new year and its first month, we will look at the first of the yearly feasts – **Passover**. The apostle, Paul, wrote to believers in his day,

“For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, therefore LET US KEEP THE FEAST...” 1 Corinthians 5:7, 8.

This reading from the King James version is accurate to the sense of the Greek with the use of the words, “keep the feast,” as are numerous other translations. There is a reason (actually two main ones) why this inspired counsel is generally ignored by professed Bible-believing Christians today.

The first is that there is a power which, in fulfillment of prophecy, was to “... think to change **times** and **laws**.” Daniel 7:25. Note that both “times” and “laws” are **plural** – more than one of each. This power says,

“The new law has its own spirit, and its own sacrifices, and its own FEASTS, which have TAKEN THE PLACE OF THOSE APPOINTED IN THE LAW OF MOSES. If we would know the DAYS TO BE OBSERVED, or the regulations about them, of the spirit in which they are to be kept holy, WE MUST GO TO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH,. NOT TO THE MOSAIC LAW.” Catholic Catechism, quoted in a Signs of the Times, Nov. 4, 1919.

“The little horn power only thought to change “times and laws” – two laws with time in them. (1) In 321 A.D. he thought to change the Sabbath of the fourth commandment moral law, the seventh day of the week, to Sunday, the first day of the week. (2) This same power, the same pagan emperor Constantine who thought to change the Sabbath to Sunday in 321 A.D., **thought to change the time of the memorial of the antitypical Passover, the Lord’s Supper** (the date established by the Son of God before the world began), from Abib 14 at evening to a different time of the month and year to a pagan memorial, Easter Sunday, in honor of “the goddess of light or spring, Eostra.” *National Encyclopedia*, Vol. 4, p. 8. Daniel teaches this in Daniel 7:25 and 9:27. As you know, the change of the Passover was in 325 A.D. (*Nat. Enc. Vol. 4:8*.)” *BFL* Feb. 2, 1978. p. 2, 3.

In those foregoing quotations we see the presumed authority for setting aside the aforementioned counsel of Paul regarding the keeping of the feast of Passover. Therein we also see the exercise of the pretense which is declaring that March 27, 2005 is the time to memorialize the resurrection of Christ, even though that date is a full month before the true Passover time.

So powerful was the influence of this “little horn,” that even after the beginning of the Protestant Reformation it was still able to wrongly influence the Protestant translation of the Bible – the King James version. In Acts 12:4 (KJV) we read

“And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after **Easter** to bring him forth to the people.”

The translators inserted the word “Easter” there in spite of the fact that the word in the Greek is *Pasha*, which everywhere else is correctly translated “Passover.”

The second major reason why most of today's Christians ignore the commandment to keep the Passover is that during the early times of the Protestant Reformation, when men were faced with the realization of the attempted change in the law of God, some who were unwilling to admit that they should be keeping the Passover and the other Bible feast days came up with the private interpretations that the feast laws were "nailed to the cross," and thus no longer binding upon believers. They try to sidestep Paul's clear admonition by using his writings in a manner contradictory to themselves. That is, they quote such verses as Colossians 2:14-16:

"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 shew 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,"

and say, out of context, that those "handwriting of ordinances that was against us" were **all** of the ordinances of the Mosaic law.

This, in spite of the fact that the Greek words which are translated "handwriting of ordinances that was against us" mean "debts," "I.O.U.s," (our *sins*), and in spite of the fact that Paul, himself, had encouraged the church at Corinth to "keep the feast" of Passover.

"My sin — oh, the bliss of this glorious thought! —

My sin, not in part, but the whole,

Is nailed to His cross, and I bear it no more,

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!"

Those verses of Colossians which are under discussion, in context with the rest of the chapter and letter, reveal a wholly different meaning than what those private interpreters try to make it appear. The primary subject of Paul's counsel is not whether or not the Biblical feast days and health laws should be observed, but rather whether or not it was necessary for those Gentile believers to be *circumcised* and obey other laws in order to keep the feasts, as they were being browbeaten by certain Judaizers into thinking.

Regarding circumcision, Paul, previously in this chapter, had stated,

"And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your **faith in Christ.**

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, **after the tradition of men**, after the rudiments of the world, **and not after Christ.** For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

“In whom **also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands**, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by **the circumcision of Christ**:Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

“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* [forgiving] the **handwriting of ordinances that was against us** [our trespasses] which was contrary to us [bringing us under the *curse* of the law – Galatians 3:13], and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.” Colossians 2:4-14. [brackets added]

It is clear from the context that the *forgiveness* of their “trespasses” was the “*Blotting out* the handwriting of ordinances that was **against us**.” The controversy of whether or not the Gentiles had entered into the true Covenant relationship by faith in Christ’s sacrifice **as they were** (uncircumcised, and not obeying the other ordinances of the Mosaic Covenant) was so hotly debated that the matter had to be brought before the council of the leading apostles for a determination of the matter. Paul and Barnabas went to the council in Jerusalem where they testified to those gathered there of the great works which God had wrought among the Gentiles while they were yet uncircumcised. Following their testimony, James related the council’s decision which reads as follows,

“And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

” ‘After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.’

“Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

“Wherefore my sentence is, **that we trouble not them**, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: But that we write unto them, that *they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.*” Acts 15:13-20.

The careful Bible student will note that those four things are a part of the law which those who are misapplying these verses say has been nailed to the cross. Why would the Apostles enjoy those four things upon the Gentile converts if there were of no value in obeying them, and if they were even contrary to Christians, as those who misapply these texts would have us believe? James then says,

“For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.” verse. 21.

Numerous Gentiles would attend those Sabbath services in their area (even before Christ’s appearance), and had heard the words of the law which God, through Moses, had declared to be a light to the world –

“Behold, I have taught you **statutes and judgments**, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep therefore and do them; for **this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations**, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, **Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.**” Deuteronomy 4:5, 6.

But the true meaning and use of ordinances of the law of God had been obscured by the leaders in Israel in Christ's day, causing Him to say,

“Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines **the commandments of men**. For **laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men**, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye *reject the commandment of God*, that ye may *keep your own tradition*.” Mark 7:7-9.

This testimony, Paul, in the same chapter of Colossians under discussion, reiterated by saying,

“Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, 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?**” Colossians 2:20-22.

So therein we see the heart of the controversy among the Colossians, and that which Paul was really addressing in his counsel to them. We also see that it was not a new situation for the Gentiles who were fellowshiping with the Jews in the synagogues when Christ came on the scene. Certain ones who had an unwarranted zeal for Rabbinical teachings of men were pressing upon the Gentile believers to observe those vain traditions of men when they would come together to keep the feast days.

Prior to Christ's death on the cross, the Jews were rightly upholding the law which stated that when a Gentile wished to join himself unto the house of Israel and keep the Passover they had to be circumcised in their flesh (Exodus 12:43-49). But to this they added many other customs and traditions of their own invention. When Christ came and brought to men the circumcision of the heart which Abram had before he was circumcised in his flesh, and which Moses, himself, had counseled the Israelites to perform upon themselves (Deuteronomy 10:16), rendering the circumcision of flesh meaningless, those certain Jews stumbled at this, and tried to uphold their private ideas in the matter. Therefore, Paul said to the Colossians,

“**Let no man** therefore **judge you** in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: **Which are** [present tense – not **past** tense (**were**)] a shadow of things **to come** [future tense – not **past** tense (have come)]; but the body is of Christ.” Colossians 2:16, 17 [brackets added]

In his letter to the Romans, Paul had more fully expounded on the matter of circumcision, which we will look at now for the sake of those Christians (Jews and Gentiles) who are under the impression that they must be circumcised in the flesh in order to partake of the Passover under the New Covenant today.

“... circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.

“Therefore if the uncircumcision **keep the righteousness of the law**, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfill the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?

“For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

“What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? ...

“Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.”
Romans 2:25-29: 3:1, 30.

The record in Acts 15 of the council’s decision regarding the Gentile converts continues,

“Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: And they wrote letters by them after this manner;

““The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: Forasmuch as we have heard, that **certain which went out from us have troubled you with words**, subverting *your souls*, saying, “**Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law:**” to whom we **gave no such commandment:**

“It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you **the same things** by mouth.

“For it **seemed good to the Holy Ghost**, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these **necessary things**; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, *ye shall do well*. Fare ye well.’ ” Acts 15:22-29.

In summation of these matters, we must point out that the foregoing decision from the council was given to the church at large around 10 years before Paul had to write to the Colossians regarding those who were urging circumcision upon the Gentile believers. Though it appears from a historical overview that the Colossian church was raised up some years after the council sent forth their decision regarding the Gentile converts, and possibly not too long before Paul was called to write to them, we see that the problem still existed. So, in this context, those who try to use these verses to show that the Bible feast days have no part in the New Testament church, are, as it were, throwing out the baby with the bath water. That is, just because Paul was called to address the *abuse* of the Gentile believers by the Judaizers when it came to their keeping of the feasts, such is no ground for assuming that the feasts themselves were done away with.

Yet this very thing has happened, not only regarding God’s holy feast days, but in regards to one of the most celebrated features of the New Testament church, the Lord’s Supper (“a” supper of the Lord – the Greek reads “a,” not “the”). That being, because of the abuses which were creeping into the church’s partaking of “a supper of the Lord” (which were addressed in 1 Corinthians 11:20-34), the way was opened for the enemy of all righteousness to attempt to remove this memorial service from the table to the altar. Says Inspiration,

“The Scriptural Ordinance of The Lord’s Supper had been supplanted [taken away – Daniel 8:11] by the idolatrous sacrifice of the mass.” *The Story of Redemption*, p. 334 [brackets added]

For more on this aspect, please see the studies,

[The Lord’s Supper From the Table to the Altar, and Back](#)

[Christ in the Daily Meal – The Lord’s Supper From the Table to the Altar, and Back, Part 2](#)

[The “I’m Being Religious About Eating” Diet – The Lord’s Supper From the Table to the Altar, and Back, Part 3](#)

[Q & A on A Supper of the Lord](#)

Regarding the continuance of the law in the Christian church, we read in the book of Hebrews,

“For the **priesthood** being **changed**, there is made of necessity a **change also of the law.**” Hebrews 7:12.

Therefore, the law was not nailed to the cross, it was *changed*. But in Paul’s day it was not changed regarding the keeping of the feast of Passover, itself, as he shows in admonishing the Corinthians to “keep the feast” (Passover). It was *how* it was to be kept which was changed. Nor was the legitimate change made centuries later when the Catholic Church attempted to change the time and manner of the memorial feast by their presumed authority.

One more word from Inspiration on the matter of Passover and the early church:

“At Philippi Paul tarried TO KEEP THE PASSOVER. ... The Philippians [Gentile converts] were the most loving and true-hearted of the apostle’s converts, and during the eight days of the feast he enjoyed peaceful and happy communion with them.” Acts of the Apostles, pp. 390, 391. [brackets added]

Therein we see that the Spirit of Prophecy has confirmed that those in the early church kept the feast of Passover.

For in-depth studies on the relationship of the law and abiding in Christ see,

[The Glad Tidings](#)

[Studies In Galatians](#)

It must be noted here, that when keeping the Passover with the Gentiles, and in counseling them on the keeping of the feast, there is no record of him urging the Gentiles, at large, to be circumcised in order to keep the feast. And the absence of such is to be well expected, considering his teachings on the matter. But there is the matter of the *circumcision* of the heart which is required to partake in the Lord’s Supper (“a” supper of the Lord) – that is, the self examination spoken of in 1 Corinthians 11:28-32, and which Christ gave an example of in washing the disciples feet on the night He instituted the memorial service. This we will examine in the subject of

THE SEARCH FOR LEAVEN

In considering that there has only been a “change” in the law, rather than its cessation, we should expect to find other things in the Mosaic law which remain for the church in antitypical settings. Among those things which were a part of the ordinances for the Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread was the search for leaven as recorded in Exodus 12:15, to wit:

“Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even **the first day** ye shall put away leaven out of your houses ...”

Even in this we will find that there has been the introduction of private opinions by the Jewish Rabbis. This the prophet Ezekiel describes as

“... their setting of their threshold **by** my thresholds, and their post **by** my posts, and the wall **between** me and them, they have even defiled my holy name by their abominations that they have committed: wherefore I have consumed them in mine anger.” Ezekiel 43:8.

As we have a another study on this particular subject, we refer the reader to it for clarification on the matter. [The Search for Leaven – The Law of God verses the Law of Man](#)

There is also another ordinance which is a part of the Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread feast. That is,

THE OFFERING OF THE WAVE SHEAF

Thus far in our examination of the matter of Pentecost in 2005 we have found it necessary to address the issue of whether or not the law regarding the feast days was nailed to the cross, and have found that it was not. We will now look at the Biblical means of determining *when* the day of Pentecost, the Feast of Weeks, is to be observed. The commandment concerning this holy feast day reads,

“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. ...

“And ye shall proclaim on the selfsame day, that it may be an holy convocation unto you: ye shall do no servile work therein: it shall be a statute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.” Leviticus 23:15, 16, 21.

From these verses we see that in determining when the day of Pentecost (meaning, “fiftieth day”) will be, it is necessary to count “seven sabbaths” from “the morrow after the sabbath.” The key, then, would lie in understanding which particular “sabbath” is meant thereby. In the verses preceding those above we read concerning the Passover and the attending Feast of Unleavened Bread,

“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.

“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.” Leviticus 23:5-11.

Of note here is the fact that there are **two** holy convocations within “**the feast of unleavened bread** ... which is called the **Passover**” (Luke 22:1) wherein there is to be done “no servile work” – one on the “**first**” day, and one on the “**seventh**” day. As the command concerning the waving of the sheaf on the morrow after “the sabbath” does not distinguish between these two holy convocations, it would be presumptuous to teach that either one of them is meant by the words “*the sabbath.*”

“Keep back thy servant also from **presumpt-u-ous** sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.” Psalms 19:13.

Furthermore, nowhere in the Scriptures are the **first** or **seventh** day of the Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread called “**the sabbath,**” with the use of the article “the” as it exists in verses 15 and 16 concerning the morrow after “**the sabbath.**” Only the **seventh day of the week**, the memorial of God’s day of rest after the six days of creation, is called “**the sabbath.**” Therefore, “the morrow after **the sabbath**” must refer to the day after **the sabbath** which falls *within* the seven days of the feast. Were it to refer to any other sabbath within the year, such would have no significance in the harvest rite of which it is a pivotal part – that being the grain /first fruits harvest.

Moreover, were the morrow after the **first** or **seventh** day of the feast to be specifically meant, the Lord would have simply given the **date** of either of those (being the 16th, and the 22nd, respectively), as he had done with the **date** of the Passover (the 14th day at even), and the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (the 15th day), rather than possibly leaving the matter ambiguous or open to speculation.

“God is not the author of confusion.” 1 Corinthians 14:33.

Also, in the book of Numbers there is another phrase to consider, that is

“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.” Numbers 33:3.

It is clear from the context that the phrase, “the morrow *after the passover*” applies to “the **fifteenth day**” of the month, and not the **16th**. This is because the Passover is said to take place “in the **fourteenth** day of the first month **at even,**” even though it is actually eaten on the 15th. The 14th refers to the day on which the Passover lamb or goat was to be *slain* “at even” – between the time of the *evening* sacrifice (at the *ninth* hour of the day), and the actual going down of the sun (the “evening” – the end of the day).

Therefore, were God to use the phrase “the morrow after the passover” to refer to any day other than the 15th (i.e., the 16th), the language would be confusing. So we see that God intentionally avoided using the phrase “the morrow after the passover,” and “the morrow after the first day of the feast of Unleavened Bread” (or any other language which could be construed to imply that the 16th of the month was intended), when distinguishing the day on which the offering of the wavesheaf was/is to take place, for it was/is to take place on “the morrow after **the sabbath.**”

There is one other thing to consider in this matter. That is, if God truly meant that the phrase “the morrow after the sabbath [the **seventh** day of the week],” referred to Sunday (the **first** day of the week), then why didn’t He just say, “on the **first** day of the week?”

First, though the phrase “on the **first** day of the week” appears in the New Testament, it does not in the Old Testament. Secondly, the Hebrew word translated, “week” comes from the word which means “seven,” but its use is not limited to seven “days.” In Genesis 29:26-30 it is used to refer to the seven

years which Jacob served for Rachel (as he had for Leah, and later for his wages). There we read,

“And Laban said, It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. Fulfil her **week**, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet **seven** other **years**. And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her **week**: and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife also. And Laban gave to Rachel his daughter Bilhah his handmaid to be her maid. And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with him yet **seven** other **years**.”

So, if God had used the phrase, “on the **first** day of the week” to designate which day the sheaf was to be waved, it would have been ambiguous in that it could have referred to either the **first** of the “seven” of the regular week, or the **first** of the “seven” of the feast of Passover/Unleavened Bread, which only occasionally are the same.

Oh, how great and mighty is the wisdom displayed in these verses of holy Scriptures! God has eliminated the possibility for error in determining the day of the wavesheaf by simply using the word “the” in connection with the word “sabbath,” to distinguish the day the “morrow” is intended to be after, as noted above.

Yet there is today, and there was also in Christ’s day, confusion and controversy concerning the correct day. The traditional Jewish teaching today, as then, follows the teachings of the Pharisees which states that the 16th (the morrow after the first day of the feast of Passover/Unleavened Bread) is the correct date to offer the wavesheaf. Of the Pharisees Jesus said,

“Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines **the commandments of men**. For **laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men**, ... Full well ye *reject* the *commandment of God*, that ye may *keep your own tradition*.” Mark 7:7-9.

Yet in spite of this, many people adhere to their tradition of using the 16th as the date for the offering of the wavesheaf (whether it be in a typical, or an antitypical manner), and for beginning the counting of the days till Pentecost. In order to shed some light on the difference between using the 16th and the first day of the regular week (Sunday), we will now look at what transpired in that eventful Passover week during which Christ was crucified and was resurrected.

THE DAYS OF THE PASSION OF CHRIST

To get a clear understanding of the events of that week, and how they relate to the 16th/Sunday question, we need to know upon which actual day of the week the feast of Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread commenced. The fact of which day it began, itself, is one of the most misunderstood, and misrepresented facts in Christian theology, though few are aware of it. As the subject of this particular study is the how and the why to reckon the days of the feast, and as we do not wish to introduce any unnecessary lengthy explanations which will distract from said purpose, we will simply present our view of the matter, with a few of the supporting texts, and ask the reader to go to our other studies to see the more in depth explanations of our point of view.

[Tract 10 – The Sign of Jonah](#)

[Three Days And Three Nights In The Heart Of The Earth](#)

Symbolic Code, Vol. 1, No. 6 pg. 5-7

Symbolic Code, Vol. 2, No. 12, pg. 6

Symbolic Code, Vol. 3, Nos. 8-9-10 p. 10

With that said, here is our understanding:

The day called Wednesday was the 14th; after sundown of Wednesday (i.e., Wednesday night) it became the 15th, and is the time when Christ ate the Passover with his disciples at the same time as the rest of the Jews. He was captured about midnight (the sixth hour of the night – ancient reckoning) of that same Wednesday night, and was taken to **Annas** for a preliminary trial (John 18:13) *before sunrise* of Thursday (the 15th). From there He was taken before **Caiaphas, the scribes, and the elders**, *still before sunrise* of Thursday (John 18:24; Matthew 26:57; Mark 14:53; Luke 22:54) for another preliminary examination. *After sunrise* on Thursday (the 15th) He was brought before **all the chief priests, the scribes, the elders of the people, and the whole council** (Matthew. 27:1; Mark 15:1 [1st part]; Luke 22:66);

Here is where the misunderstanding comes in. The Jewish leaders, in plotting to do away with Jesus, had previously stated, “*Not on the feast day*, lest there be *an uproar among the people.*” Matthew 26:5; Mark 14:2.

The “feast day” was the 15th, being the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (an holy convocation). It began at sundown on Wednesday, and would end at sundown on Thursday. All that transpired both *before sunrise* of the 15th before Annas, Caiaphas, the scribes, and the elders (not yet before all the chief priests, scribes, elders of the people – the whole council), and all that transpired *after sunrise* of the 15th before all the chief priests, scribes, elders of the people – the whole council – **was not public**, and, therefore, there was little danger of causing “an uproar among the people.” But were the matter to go public then (“on the feast day”), when Jerusalem would be crowded with a much greater number of people than it would be on the other days during the week of the feast (the locals being about their daily work in the fields and elsewhere, and the visitors being out in the countryside seeing the sights), there would be a great uproar, for many were there expecting to see Jesus for healing and teaching as they had done on the other previous feasts during the time of His ministry.

Though in the morning of the 15th, after His full trial before the Sanhedrin, Christ was taken to the next place of trial (that before Pilate), the time involved in the events which transpired between then and the time He was crucified is greater than many believe them to be. This greater time period is shown in the Scriptures, but is not clearly seen without a close comparison of all the Gospels. Matthew, Mark, and John all leave out the fact that after Jesus had been before Pilate for a while, enduring many accusations from the Jews, He was then sent to Herod (Luke 23:7-11), who also examined him at length, heard many accusations against Him from the Jews, and gave Him to his soldiers to be mocked before sending Him back to Pilate.

The next timeline reference we are given after He is returned to Pilate is that in John 19:14, where we read,

“And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the **sixth hour**: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!” John 19:14.

[Note: More on this phrase “the preparation of the passover” later]

This “sixth hour” is most significant. According to the ancient reckoning, the sixth hour referred to either **noon** or **midnight**. We know from the record that Jesus was on the cross at a “sixth hour,” when there “was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.” (Matthew 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44). It is also evident

that this “sixth hour” when He was on the cross must be **noon**, being understood by the *temporary* “darkness” until the ninth hour. So the “sixth hour” during which He was first before Pilate had to be the preceding **midnight**, for **sixth hour** previous to that was **noon** of the feast day – the 15th (the day which the Jewish leaders had determined to be too dangerous to do away with Jesus because of the reaction of the people).

Moreover, as Jesus had been before the “whole council” *after* the break of day on the 15th (Thursday), this “sixth hour” would also have to be *after* that morning. The next **sixth hour** after that morning then would be **noon** of the 15th (Thursday). The common traditional reckoning has Christ on the cross at the “sixth hour” (noon) following those trials before the Jewish leaders, and the ones before Pilate, Herod, and again Pilate (as again recently portrayed in the movie, *The Passion of the Christ*). But John 19:14 has Christ before **Pilate** at a “sixth hour” – before He was crucified at the **third** hour (Mark 15:25 – about 9:00 a.m.) and on the cross at the “sixth hour” (noon). These facts combine to clearly show that Christ’s capture, trials before Jewish leaders, and crucifixion could not have all taken place on the same day within a 12 hour (or so) period, as is commonly understood and portrayed.

As further proof of this, consider that if that “sixth hour” before Pilate was the one immediately following the trials before the Jewish leaders (that being **noon** of the 15th), how could Christ have been on the cross at the same time on the same day? As such was impossible, it is evident that the whole matter from the time of His capture in the garden to His being nailed to the cross at the “third hour,” and being on the cross at the “sixth hour,” had to not only be longer than 12 hours, but also had to be more than 24 hours – more than one full day.

Consider also the actual time involved in the events which transpired *after* the sunrise following Christ’s capture in the garden, and His pre-sunrise trials before some of the Jewish leaders. These times are:

- the time for convening and conducting the trial before the “whole council” after sunrise, and reaching the determination to send Christ to Pilate;
- the time it took in sending Him to Pilate;
- the time for convening the hearing before Pilate;
- the time involved in the first hearing before Pilate wherein he heard the *many* accusations against Christ, and had learned that He was from Galilee, and thus in Herod’s jurisdiction;
- the time it took to send Him to Herod;
- the time to convene and conduct the hearing before Herod, wherein Herod “questioned with Him in *many* words; ... and the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him;” the time for Herod’s “men of war” to set Him at nought and mock him, and array Him in a gorgeous robe;
-

the time it took to send Him back to Pilate;

- the time it took for Pilate to call together “the chief priests and the rulers and the people” after Jesus was returned to him.
- the time for Pilate to reexamine Him;
- the time to have Barabbas brought forth from prison, and to present Jesus and him before the people for them to make a choice;
- the time to scourge Him again;
- the time to carry the cross from Pilate’s Judgment Hall to the place of crucifixion, outside of the city.

The popular tradition says that all of those events occurred between sunrise on the 15th and the **third** hour of the same morning – a period of 3 hours. Yet considering that those conducting the trials themselves all had to maintain a certain decorum, and that the trials could not be quick, short sessions. This is especially true of those before the Romans, and more so regarding the scourgings by Herod and Pilate. As a man’s life was at stake, the Romans were not about to easily let the Jewish leaders dupe them into murdering an innocent man.

But when we take into account that John’s record has Christ before Pilate “about the **sixth** hour” (the midnight *after* the end of the 15th), then the events which transpired before Pilate and Herod would have easily been done before the 3rd hour of the 16th (Friday), the actual day of the crucifixion. Keep in mind that the Romans were not in the same hurry to get rid of Christ as were the Jews. Pilate was eventually actually on His side, had discerned the intent of the Jewish leaders, was not happy about it (Matthew 27:18, 23), and sought to release Him; and that Herod was very curious about Jesus, “exceeding glad” to see Him, and asked Him “many words.” (Luke 23:8, 9).

Thus, with the foregoing in mind, we see that the crucifixion could *not* have taken place on the 15th, the day of the feast (Thursday), but, rather, took place on the **16th** – Friday.

This brings us back to matter of the offering of the wavesheaf – that is, was/is it to be done on the 16th, or on Sunday?

From the foregoing we have seen that Christ was on the cross on the 16th (Friday). But was that in fulfillment of the offering of the wavesheaf in God’s eyes? Some have concluded that since He was “lifted up” when He was on the cross (as He said He would be – John 3:14, 15; 8:28; 12:32, 33), that He was thus *waved*. But the waving of the typical sheaf, itself, contained a totally different meaning.

The purpose in offering the wavesheaf on “the morrow after the sabbath” was to indicate the *beginning* of the harvest, not the *end* of something. When Christ was about to die He stated, “It is **finished**,” not “it has *begun*.” We read of the wavesheaf offering,

“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.” Leviticus 23:10-11.

The Jewish leaders sought to ease their consciences in what they were about to do by saying that Jesus had to die to save the nation. Of this we read,

“And one of them [the Pharisees], named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that **one man should die** for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.” John 11: 49, 50.

But the question arises, was Caiaphas saying that with the intention of that “one man” (Christ) being the one which was “to be accepted **for you**,” (as is said of the wavesheaf) seeing that neither he nor the majority of the Pharisees even believed in Him, nor in His work, nor in His purpose for being on earth? It wasn't for the personal salvation from sin for those in Israel or the world that Caiaphas and those with him were planning on killing Jesus, but rather that their own positions would be secure within the Roman empire. We read,

“Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.

“Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. **If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him:** and the Romans *shall come and take away both our place and nation.*” John 11:45-48.

Therein we see their true purpose – the fear of the Romans, not the **fear of God**. This is borne out when later

“they cried out, Away with him [Christ], away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your **King**? The chief priests answered, We have **no king** but Caesar.” John 19:15.

This we also know from the fact that even though the death and resurrection brought salvation to many in Israel who afterwards believed on Christ, His death meant the *end* of the Jewish nation within the Roman empire, when a few decades later Jerusalem was attacked by the Romans, and the temple destroyed. So, in applying the fact that “one man should die for the people” in the way that they did (by crucifying Christ themselves), they ended their positions and authority, rather than preserving them.

Regarding Caiaphas' declaration “that one man should die for the people,” John says,

“And this spake he not of himself: *but being high priest that year*, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.” John 11:51, 52.

This statement that what Caiaphas said he said as “high priest,” isolated from its context, would seem to imply that he and the other leaders and priests were knowingly doing right by thinking to crucify Christ. But such is no more the case than was the situation when the rebellious prophet Balaam was hired to curse Israel, but was forced by circumstances to actually bless them (Numbers 22:5-24:9).

So, rather than the Jewish leaders' offering (sic) of Christ being something which was "to be **accepted** for you," it was actually something which was the cause of their *rejection*, as was the case with Balaam (Numbers 31:8). Thus, Christ's being on the cross on the 16th, being wholly of man's invention – that is, both to time and purpose – was *not* in fulfillment of the offering of the wavesheaf. They lifted Him up on the cross on day of *their* wavesheaf offering, while wholly ignoring the Lord's time and purpose for the true wavesheaf offering.

If they had let Jesus alone, and all men had the opportunity to believe on Him, some others with selfish characters like themselves would have been so offended by Christ's purity and effect on the people that they would have put Him to death. But the Jewish leaders were so interested in themselves being first in all things that they did it to Him before others had a chance to (though this may not have been in their forethoughts).

And this desire to have the preeminence above other men led them to create the idea that the 16th is the correct day (the morrow after **the** sabbath) for the wavesheaf offering, and pressing it upon men through their positions, resulting in them putting Christ on the cross on the 16th – the day after the first day of the feast. But in proving them wrong in the whole matter, God raised Christ "on the morrow after **the** sabbath," Sunday, and with him an unnumbered multitude, as we read,

"Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

"And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and **many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection**, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." Matthew 27:50-53.

Thus on that Sunday (the morrow after the sabbath) we see the **beginning** of a harvest, unlike that which was seen on the 16th when He was on the cross, and they in their graves.

It must be noted at this point that the word "sheaf" is somewhat misleading, as to the actual offering which was to be waved. The Hebrew word which is translated "sheaf" means "omer" – referring to a specific quantity of dried and ground meal, and not mere stalks of unprocessed grain. There is a different Hebrew word which denotes unprocessed stalks of grain, though the two are used at times interchangeably. The actual offering was as follows:

The High Priest would be presented with an omer (about two and a half pounds) of very finely crushed barley. He would scoop up a **handful** of the grain, place some incense on it, wave it before the Lord, bless the Lord, and cast it upon the fire of the altar. Thus we see that the "omer" of "firstfruits" actually offered was *more* than a single stalk of grain, but *less* than the total quantity of the "omer" gathered.

Says Inspiration:

“Christ arose from the dead as the first fruits of those that slept. He was the **antitype of the wave sheaf**, and His resurrection took place **on the very day** the wave sheaf was to be presented before the Lord. For more than a thousand years this symbolic ceremony had been performed. ... so **Christ the first fruits** represented the great spiritual harvest to be gathered for the kingdom of God. ... As Christ arose, He brought from the grave **a multitude of captives**. They ascended with Him as trophies of His victory over death and the grave. These, said Christ, are no longer the captive of Satan; I have redeemed them. I have brought **them** from the grave as the **first fruits** of My power...” *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 785, 786.

Therein we see the complete offering of the wavesheaf – Christ **and** those resurrected with Him. Yet they were only a portion, a **handful**, of all the saints who had previously died and are to be resurrected at His second coming.

“Why did Christ arise on the very day of the offering of the wave sheaf, and why did He offer not only Himself but His trophies on that very day, if the ceremonial law were nailed to the cross?”

“The simple answer is found in Jesus’ statement, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to FULFIL.” Math 5:17.

“Fulfil, of course, does not mean to cease, but to carry out, to put in force!” *BFL* Feb. 2, 1978.

“Further, if the ceremonial law were nailed to the cross, what law was Jesus following when He presented the wave-sheaf in heaven before the Father on the morrow after the Sabbath? ‘Christ was the first fruits of them that slept. It was to the glory of God that the Prince of life should be the first fruits, the antitype of the wave sheaf. ... This very scene, the resurrection of Christ from the dead, had been celebrated in type by the Jews. ... So those who had been raised were to be presented to the universe as a pledge of the resurrection of all who believe in Christ...’ *Selected Messages*, Book 1, p. 305.” *ibid*.

Thus we see the difference between the results of implicitly following the Lord’s commands, and following the private interpretations of men. The first leads to the joy of the Lord, and second to the sufferings of Christ. It is no different in anything we do. There is no reason to expect that the Lord will honor those who will be following the commandments of men in celebrating March 27, 2005 as the memorial of Christ’s resurrection, and May 15 as Pentecost, any more than He did when the Jews waved Him on the cross in 31 A.D. But we can be sure that the devil will do all in his power to make those who are indifferent to these things, and those who are in open rebellion to God’s specific commandments *feel* that they are safe and in the Lord’s blessings and light.

“For **rebellion** is as the sin of **witchcraft**, and **stubbornness** is as **iniquity** and **idolatry**.” 1 Samuel 15:23.

Those involved in witchcraft, iniquity, and idolatry usually *feel* that things are well with them, and are even electrified in their actions and emotions. Yet such is the counterfeit of being filled with the Spirit of truth and righteousness.

Let it not be said of any who read these words what was said to king Saul, and what many among the Jewish leaders also learned by their own experiences, that is,

“Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.” *ibid*.

Before we leave the matter of the Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread, we will look further into the matter of

“THE PREPARATION OF THE PASSOVER”

The term “the preparation,” is used in the Gospels with the same meaning as the term “the sixth day” is used in the Old Testament – that is, both are used to indicate **Friday**, the day before the seventh day Sabbath. Applying this common usage to the use of the term in John 19:14, “... it was **the preparation** of the passover,” would cause it to be understood as meaning, “... it was **Friday** of the Passover.”

Not only would understanding this text exclusively in this way harmonize this verse with the other verses where John uses it concerning Jesus actually keeping the common Passover, but it also harmonizes his account with the other three Gospel writers who apply the same term to the day before the Sabbath, without mentioning the fact that it was also within the Passover week, as has John.

The same is true in John 19:31, where we read, “... because it was **the preparation**. ...” It should be understood to mean “... because it was **Friday**. ...”

In Matthew 27:62 we read, “Now the next day, that followed the *day* of **the preparation**, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate...” Though word “day” is added, the meaning that it is **Friday** (the preparation) is clear.

This is even more clearly revealed in Mark 15:42, “And now when the even was come, because it was the **preparation**, that is, **the day before the sabbath**,” and in

Luke 23:54, “And that day was **the preparation**, and *the sabbath* drew on.”

There is no indication that the words “the sabbath” refer to the Passover or the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, as some would have us believe. As noted earlier, the phrase “**the sabbath**” is only used in connection with the **seventh day** of the regular week – the memorial of the creation week..

Understanding that the use of the word “preparation” is only another name for “Friday” (the day of preparation for the Sabbath), and not for a special event (the preparing for the Passover), completely unravels any theory that Jesus kept any other day for the Passover than the day commonly recognized among the Jews. The same is true regarding those theories which say that the feast which He kept the night He was captured (which the Scriptures declare to be the Passover) was a common evening meal, or a different, new kind of feast.

This would also lend credence to the thought that the phrase “the preparation of the Passover” was just John’s Aramaic/Hebrew way of identifying the day of the week (Friday) during an important time of the Jewish year, Passover (The Feast of Unleavened Bread).

“THE JEWS’ PASSOVER”

There are many theories that declare that Christ kept a day as Passover different from the rest of the Jews which are based on a misinterpretation of the statements “the Jews’ passover,” and “the preparation of the passover” (which we have already seen refers simply to the Friday during the Passover week). They teach that the “Jews’ passover” was a different passover from the one which Christ kept – one which the Jews created in disregard to the instructions of Moses. Or, that the one which Christ kept He newly created in

antagonism to the law of Moses. But such are not supported by anything other than shifting sand.

John is the only Gospel writer who uses the phrase “the Jews’ passover.” He wrote at a much later date than the others. What is significant about the timing of the writing of John’s Gospel is that it took place after the destruction of the temple, during a time when there was a major influx of Gentiles. The Jews were not then celebrating the Passover because they couldn’t sacrifice the passover animals and eat the passover in any place other than that where the Lord had chosen to place His name (Deuteronomy 16:2, 6), and the temple had been destroyed about 25 years before John wrote his Gospel. Consequently, it was about 25 years since the last national celebration of the Passover by “the Jews” was witnessed by the Gentile world, though they could witness the Christian version of the Passover.

Therefore, it would be a somewhat necessary thing for John to inform his readers more definitively about “*the Jews’* passover” than the other Gospel writers who wrote much early, when the Jews’ celebration of Passover still involved a yearly pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the week-long convocation, and the sacrificing of the Passover lambs or goats.

There is no indication that John was trying to differentiate between the Passover Christ kept and the one the Jews kept by his use of the phrase “the Jews Passover.” He was simply informing his readers of the fact that what was happening took place during a major gathering of the Jews (at their gathering in Jerusalem for Passover). His use of the phrase “the Jews’ Passover” would also be appropriate considering that the Christians were not required to keep the Passover with the slaying of animals, for that Mosaic ordinance of the Passover had passed away at the cross and was replaced with another.

We will now proceed to the next major feast under consideration herein,

PENTECOST

“Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD.

“Ye shall **bring out of your habitations** two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be **baken with leaven**; they are the firstfruits unto the LORD. ...

“And the priest shall **wave them** with the bread of the firstfruits for a wave offering before the LORD, with the two lambs: they shall be holy to the LORD for the priest.

“And ye shall proclaim on the selfsame day, that it may be an holy convocation unto you: ye shall do no servile work therein: it shall be a statute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.” Leviticus 23:16, 17, 20, 21.

One of the most notable features of the feast of Pentecost is that the two wave loaves are to be baked with **leaven**. In the feast of Passover/Unleavened Bread, as in most of the meal offerings, **leaven** is forbidden as it symbolizes something undesirable – sin. Yet in this feast **leaven** takes on a different symbolism.

“Another parable spake he unto them; The **kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven**, which a **woman** took, and hid in **three measures** of meal, till the whole **was leavened**. All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them.” Matthew 13:33, 34.

Tradition teaches us that it was on the day of Pentecost when the law was given at Mt. Sinai, and the Covenant was renewed with the children of Israel. Among the verses which relate this we also find the first mention of God's kingdom ("the kingdom of heaven"). Of the nature of the kingdom, we read,

"And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.

"Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: "And ye shall be unto me a **kingdom of priests**, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel." Exodus 19:3-6.

Therein we see what the kingdom of heaven was to be – "a kingdom of **priests**, and an holy nation." The next mention we find of God's kingdom is concerning its king, and his duties regarding the law given at Sinai –

"When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me; Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, **whom the LORD thy God shall choose**: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother.

"But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.

"And it shall be, when he 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**: That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his **kingdom**, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel." Deuteronomy 17:14-20.

We see therein that God, and not man, is to appoint whom He will to be king over His kingdom of priests. Also, that the king is always to keep before him that which pertains to the priests – the law of God, with its commandments, statutes, and judgments (the moral life of the nation), and this that he may be humble before God and man.

The next incident which involves the renewing of the Covenant, and the King of God's own appointment, is that which occurred on the day of Pentecost, 31 A.D. Of this we read,

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Acts 2:1-4.

There, as upon the mount in Moses' day, there was a loud sound and the descent of fire, indicating that God was coming near to His people. Such was what happened on earth in God's kingdom while something else was happening at the same time in heaven with the King of priests.

"...after Christ's ascension **His enthronement in His mediatorial kingdom** was signaled by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. On the day of Pentecost the spirit was given." *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 120.

The prophecy of this enthronement is in Zechariah 6 –

"And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is the Branch; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and **shall sit and rule upon his throne**; and **he shall be a priest upon his throne**: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." Zechariah 6:12, 13.

So, on the day of Pentecost, while the High Priest and King who had perfectly kept the law of God was being enthroned, the Holy Spirit was being given to those who were to be a "nation of priests" on earth, so that they also may perform their duties – and this in order for Him ("the Branch") to "build the temple of the LORD."

"Pentecost brought them the heavenly illumination. ...

"What was the result of the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost? The glad tidings of a risen Saviour were carried to the uttermost parts of the inhabited world. As the disciples proclaimed the message of redeeming grace, hearts yielded to the power of this message. The church beheld converts flocking to her from all directions. Backsliders were reconverted. Sinners united with believers in seeking the pearl of great price. Some who had been the bitterest opponents of the gospel became its champions. The prophecy was fulfilled, 'He that is feeble . . . shall be as David; and the house of David . . . as the angel of the Lord.' Zechariah 12:8. Every Christian saw in his brother a revelation of divine love and benevolence. One interest prevailed; one subject of emulation swallowed up all others. The ambition of the believers was to reveal the likeness of Christ's character and to labor for the enlargement of His kingdom." *Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 45, 48.

These things happened because the disciples were as ready as they could be to partake in the blessings foreordained for **this time** of the Lord's own selection, as pointed out in the typical ceremonial system, and fulfilled in its antitypical, timely, manner.

"If Pentecost had been nailed to the cross, as many claim, then please explain the above [quoted] statement[s]. Then, too, if Pentecost was no longer to be observed, what was Jesus doing in the heavenly sanctuary on the day of Pentecost officiating as the High Priest and pouring out the promised Spirit upon the disciples? Either Jesus was in the wrong place at the wrong time doing the wrong thing, or multitudes are in error by saying the feast days were nailed to the cross! Now surely, Jesus never sinned, so He was in the right place at the right time (day of Pentecost), and doing the right thing. Sister White says, 'But after Christ's ascension **His enthronement in His mediatorial kingdom** was signaled by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. On the day of Pentecost the spirit was given.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 120. What a strange thing for Jesus to do if the Pentecost were illegal. ...

"It is clear that Jesus sanctioned the 120 observing the day of Pentecost, since He sent them the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the time of the 'daily,' the third hour (Acts 2:15). Not only the 120 were sanctified on the day of Pentecost, but in addition there were about 3,000 'that gladly received his word.' Acts 2:41. God

does everything according to correct time and on time!” *BFL* Feb. 2, 1978, p. 2.

On the day of Pentecost in Moses’ time, the mount was holy and on fire (Exodus 19:12, 18-23: 20:18), while the people were not. Due to the people having lost what faith they had when tarrying for Moses to come down from the mountain, they had Aaron build the golden calf. In punishment for this, the faithful Levites (who, after this event, were singled out to be the only priests among those who were to be a “nation of priests”), slew 3000 of the idolaters (Exodus 32:26-28). Yet, in Christ’s time, those disciples who faithfully tarried in Jerusalem until they received the anointing from on high so that they could truly become a “nation of priests,” brought life to 3000 that same day.

Thus we see that the keeping of the day of Pentecost can result in a savor of life unto life, or death unto death. We would do well to take these things to heart, and obey the commandments, statutes, and judgements of God in their antitypical settings as Christ continues to fulfill the law.

SUMMARY

Though the intention of this presentation is to set before God’s people another portion of the controversy between God’s laws and man’s laws, so that we “may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good” (Isaiah 7:15), we can only pray that many will appreciate the true light herein (we can’t expect all to), and take up their crosses and seek to come up to the high standard which Christ spoke of when He said,

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to **fulfil**. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till **all be fulfilled**.

“Whosoever therefore *shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so*, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever *shall do and teach them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

“For I say unto you, **That except your righteousness shall EXCEED the righteous-ness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.**” Matthew 5:17-20.

The scribes and Pharisees were most zealous to keep themselves from the customs and traditions of the Gentiles, as commanded in the law –

“When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt **not learn** to do after the abominations of those nations.” Deuteronomy 18:9.

The apostle Paul also addressed the fact that the Christians were to keep themselves separate from the customs and traditions of the unsaved in his letter to the Galatians, many of whom were converts from among the Gentiles (“nations”) –

“Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye *did service* unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, *how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements*, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

“**Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.**”

“I am afraid of [for] you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.” Galatians 4:8-11.

In the light of all the foregoing, and especially that of Paul’s counsel to the Corinthians to “keep the feast” of Passover, the “days, and months, and times, and years” to which the Galatians were reverting were not the feasts of the Lord (the Sabbaths, New Moons, Passover, Pentecost, etc.), but, instead, were the times they had observed when they “knew not God” – that is, the pagan feast days which are the roots of times like Easter and Christmas.

In speaking of the offerings of the Gentiles which would take place on those pagan feast days, Paul says,

“But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to **devils**, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with **devils**. *Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils* : ye cannot be partakers of the Lord’s table, and of the table of **devils**.” 1 Corinthians 10:20, 21.

Therein we see what spirits abound on the pagan feast days which have been clothed in Christian garb – the spirits of devils. Anyone who has candidly observed the times surrounding Christmas cannot help but see that the devils are having a field day with people during that time (and not a few among them professed Christians). The same is true with the celebration of Easter, with the indulgence in new, fashionable clothing, and the vain customs involving eggs and the Easter bunny. All of which foster “all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, [which] is not of the Father, but is of the world.” 1 John 2:16.

In the matter of Easter (and also with Christmas, though to somewhat of a lesser degree), there is more emphasis placed on *pageants* that take place then than on the Gospel itself. Those theatric performances are displacing the true spirit of meekness and humility. The strife and envy to be the one who plans or performs in the pageants overshadows the message of Christ’s sufferings, death, and resurrection. This is apparent from the response to the recently released movie, *The Passion of the Christ**. Many ministers and other church members have said that seeing the depiction of the horrors that Jesus went through to provide salvation to mankind (even though the movie somewhat exaggerated the facts), moved them to a renewed commitment to Christ and His work in the world. Few come out of the Easter pageants with the same resolve to bear their own crosses unto His glory.

*[Note: For a discussion on this movie, and the response to it by a prominent Adventist writer, see our presentation, [The Passion of the Gospel](#)]

The current general use of the medium of theatrics, while bringing out certain emotional and intellectual responses, when mixed with errors in doctrine and practices as they usually are, eclipses Christ’s true work in the heavenly Sanctuary where the “**fountain** opened ... for sin and for uncleanness” (Zechariah 13:1) – His blood – flows freely for the salvation of mankind. Thus the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing to people the conviction of the true daily intercession of Christ in these times, and its supreme importance in the justification and sanctification of His people, is, as it were, held in subjection to the fanciful notions of those who use their positions to steal men’s souls, and bring them into the same bondage they are in – bondage to “the weak and beggarly elements” of the carnal mind.

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to **seducing spirits**, and **doctrines of devils**.” 1 Timothy 4:1.

And what are among the foremost “doctrines of devils” which the “seducing spirits” teach? That the feast days have been nailed to the cross, and that we should bow down to the vain customs of men by observing the times and customs instituted by church of Rome – Easter, Christmas, new years on January 1st, etc.

Therefore,

“Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches [those Jews who supplanted the law of God with their own commandments and traditions], **take heed lest he also spare not thee.**” Romans 11: 20, 21.

So, Brethren, what is to be the end of this matter?

“*Take up the **stumblingblock** out of the way of my people.* For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a *contrite and humble spirit*, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.” Isaiah 57:14-16.

Although we have seen the results of the falling away (2 Thessalonians 2:3) in the attempted change of the Sabbath from the 7th day (Saturday) to the 1st day (Sunday), and the great efforts put forth to restore the truth of the times of God’s own appointment, the process has been a slow one. Please remember, that if you were to have learned how to keep the Sabbath from the pioneers of this movement during their first ten years of teaching and keeping it, you would have learned it wrong, because they taught that it should be kept from 6 p.m. to 6 p.m. But God, as it were, blinks at the times of our child-like ignorance, as stated in the following –

“Said the angel: ‘Take the word of God, read it, understand, and ye cannot err....’ I asked the angel if the frown of God had been upon His people for commencing the Sabbath as they had [from 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.]. I was directed back to the first rise of the Sabbath, and followed the people of God up to this time, but did not see that the Lord was displeased, or frowned upon them. I inquired why it had been thus, that at this late date [about 1855] we **must change** the time of commencing the Sabbath. Said the angel: ‘*Ye shall understand, but not yet, not yet.*’ Said the angel: ‘*If light come, and that light is set aside or rejected, then comes condemnation and the frown of God; but before the light comes, there is no sin for there is no light to reject.*’ ” *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 1, p. 116.

This counsel applies equally well to any doctrine which is being restored to the remnant church. In Revelation 18 we read,

“And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

“And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, **Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.** For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.” Revelation 18:1-5.

It would do no good to come out of Babylon to avoid receiving her plagues if we continue to drink of her “wine” (false doctrines – *Testimony to Ministers*, p.61). It is that “wine” which constitutes the principles underlying the “mark of the beast” (Revelation 13:17; 14:11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4).

“It is for the interest of all to understand what the mark of the beast is, and how they may escape the dread threatenings of God. Why are men not interested to know what constitutes the mark of the beast and his

image? **It is in direct contrast with the mark of God.** [Ex. 31:12-17, quoted.]” *Manuscript 88*, 1897.

“The sign, or seal, of God is revealed in the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, the Lord’s memorial of creation. “The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily My Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.” Exodus 31:12, 13. Here the Sabbath is clearly designated as a sign between God and His people.

“The mark of the beast is the opposite of this—the observance of the first day of the week. This mark distinguishes those who acknowledge the supremacy of the papal authority from those who acknowledge the authority of God.” *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 8, p. 117

While this sound counsel is understood by many, there is more to this matter of the “mark of the beast.”

“The light we have received upon the third angel’s message is the true light. The mark of the beast *is exactly what it has been proclaimed to be. Not all in regard to this matter is yet understood, nor will it be understood until the unrolling of the scroll ...*” *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 6, p 17.

The controversy between “the supremacy of the papal authority” does not rest solely in the attempted change of Sabbath, but in any exercise of that power which is contrary to “the authority of God” – including its use against God’s holy feast days. Though the “scroll” had not unrolled far enough for the light on God’s feast days to be seen in the times when the above quoted counsels were given, it has today. So while there is no condemnation “before the light comes,” and “there [was] no sin for there [was] no light to reject,” such is not the case today.

“Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man *put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way.*” Romans 14:13.

When speaking of whether or not Christians should eat things offered to idols, Paul gave counsel of which the principles are equally relevant to the matter of whether or not we should regard the customs, traditions, and institutions of the living idols of Rome.

“As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, *we know that an idol is nothing* in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.

“Howbeit *there is not in every man that knowledge:* for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and **their conscience being weak is defiled.**” 1 Corinthians 8:4-7.

We know that the commandments of Rome (even if they are upheld by so-called Protestants) are as “nothing.” That is, one’s salvation and standing with God are not affected by things which have no real authority in God’s eyes. But, as we see, some may be adversely affected by others’ participation in wrong doing. Paul continues

“But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a **stumblingblock** to them that are weak.

“For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol’s temple, **shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols**. And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother **perish**, for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.

“Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.” 1 Corinthians 8:8.

So, as with eating things sacrificed to idols, some with weak consciences are adversely affected by seeing one who knows better (or should know better) paying homage, in spite of themselves, to institutions and practices which have no foundation in the word of God. Such hypocritical practices become a “stumblingblock,” and “an occasion to fall” for those who may be led by others’ examples to presume that the power which has set itself against God’s “times and laws” (Daniel 7:25) should be honored in any way in their presumptions.

If Paul was willing to “eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest [he] make [his] brother to offend,” should not we do the same in regards to honoring the “times and laws” (plural) of “the man of sin?” – and that for the sake of others who may be drawn away from Christ and into “all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and **the pride of life**, [which] is not of the Father, but is of the world.” 1 John 2:16.

Is it not “the pride of life” which is at the root of the Papal assumptions – thinking, like Satan, that they are able to exalt their thrones above God’s throne? (Isaiah 14:13). Therefore, brethren,

“... take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a **stumblingblock** to them that are weak.” 1 Corinthians 8:9.

Through all of this controversy we have this word concerning the acceptance and rejection of God’s light –

“I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.

“For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart. I have seen his ways, and *will heal him*: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners.

“I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the LORD; and I will heal him.

“But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is **no peace**, saith my God, to the wicked.” Isaiah 57:16-21

“**Great peace** have they which **love thy law**: and nothing shall offend them.”Psalms 119:165.

“As I saw what we must be in order to inherit glory, and then saw how much Jesus had suffered to obtain for us so rich an inheritance, I prayed that we might be baptized into Christ’s sufferings, that we might not shrink at trials, but bear them with patience and joy, knowing what Jesus had suffered that we through His poverty and sufferings might be made rich. Said the angel, “Deny self; ye must step fast.” Some of us have

had time to get the truth and to advance step by step, and every step we have taken has given us strength to take the next. But now time is almost finished, and *what we have been years learning, they will have to learn in a few months*. **They will also have much to unlearn and much to learn again.** Those who would not receive the mark of the beast and his image when the decree goes forth, must have decision *now* to say, *Nay*, we will not regard the institution[s] of the beast.” *Early Writings*, p. 67. [brackets added]

“Now the God of **peace**, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, **through the blood of the everlasting covenant**, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

“And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation.” Hebrews 13:20-22.

“He said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.” Luke 9:23, 24.

“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth Him that begat loveth Him also that is begotten of Him. By this we know that *we love the children of God* [and will not put stumblingblocks, nor occasions to fall, in their way], **when we love God, and keep His command-ments** . For **THIS IS THE LOVE OF GOD, THAT WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS: and his commandments are not grievous**. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” 1 John 5:2. [brackets added]

The “**great peace** have they which **love thy law**” and “keep **His** commandments” will enable them to say that they are happy to be April fools.

Yours to receive the mark of God,

Doug Mitchell