

Hello, to the Body of Without Spot or Wrinkle Ministries International,

Our Father has taught us so much this year, of 2008. He has taught us His calendar and set times.

I know I covered a lot of material over the year, however it is very important to us as believers to learn our Fathers ways.

I thought you would enjoy reading and learning more about God's Holy days and there meaning to us as believers, and why we have chosen to celebrate them as a Congregation. We have to remember that God is restoring the Bride with water by the word, to present her holy and without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

After much studying, I found this book, *Our lost Legacy*. I have taken this teaching on the feast days, from the book, chapter 15. I agree with everything He has written. This material is so rich I know you will enjoy it, I encourage all to read the book, you can read it on line at <http://www.restorationfoundation.org>, when the main page comes up, on the left hand side, toward the bottom, [Golden Key Books\(Read Restoring Our Lost Legacy Free!\)](#) or you can order a copy.

Yahweh's Liturgical Calendar, Chapter 15

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Of all the elements of the biblical system of praise, worship, and service, probably none has been more generally neglected by the vast majority of the Christian community than God's liturgical calendar (the calendar prescribing times and programs of worship). While many elements of biblical Judaism have been perpetuated in most Christian churches (e.g., Bible readings, tithing, offerings), nineteen centuries of Gentile tradition have so obscured the calendar of events which Yahweh gave to his people as to render them essentially meaningless to millions of Christians.

The liturgical calendar of many Christian churches of the world today prescribes the observance of such days as Christmas, Epiphany, Shrove Tuesday, Lent, Palm Sunday, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Ascension Day, All Saints Day, Valentines Day, Halloween, and a host of others. In its past nineteen centuries, the church has set most of these days apart to memorialize some of the greatest events in the history of Christianity, and no doubt the intentions of those who established them were good. The truth is, however, that these days of memorial represent a departure—in some cases a radical departure—from the liturgical calendar that was outlined by God, himself, in the Hebrew Scriptures.

A grave inconsistency is found in this Christian teaching which relegates biblical festivals to meaningless obscurity by consigning them to the category of dreadful "legalisms" while at the same time exalting to sacrosanct and required status festivals of at best dubious and at worst

outright pagan origin. Much of Christianity at least equals if not exceeds Judaism in its legalistic observance of its liturgical calendar, many days of which are but pagan festivals covered with a thin veneer of Christian tradition. While disavowing the importance of set-apart times when the question of biblical festivals is raised ("We observe every day alike," they say.), many churches still give preferential treatment to the times (days and seasons) that have become a part of Christian tradition, requiring their observance and prescribing certain practices while proscribing others.

The Need to Remember

Humans are prone to forgetfulness. It is simply impossible to remember everything all the time. For this reason God has set apart daily, weekly, monthly, seasonal, and generational times of remembrance. The only one of the ten commandments which concerns time begins with the injunction: "Remember. . ." Since the Bible is a record of the events of God's dealing with man in history, a recounting of those times when God and man met, it is a call to remembrance for men of each generation to recall and even reenact in their lives what produced communion between God and man in other eras. David declared it: "I will remember the works of the Lord; surely I will remember thy wonders of old" (Psalm 77:11). He further expanded upon this call to remembrance and its purpose: "When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me . . . I went with [the multitude] . . . to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday" (Psalm 42:4).

Though Christians celebrate his birth and his resurrection at Christmas and Easter, respectively, Jesus commanded his disciples to celebrate only one event in his life—his death. ". . . this do ye . . . in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come" (II Corinthians 11:25, 26). The celebration of the Eucharist is a continuing remembrance of the death of the Messiah that provided atonement for man's sins and the expectation of the resurrection unto eternal life. This is the reason for Paul's exhortation to Gentiles at Corinth: ". . . for even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: *therefore let us keep the feast . . .*" (I Corinthians 5:7, 8). It is through sanctifying time that we remember. And, because man tends to forget, God has established markers in time, appointments on his own calendar, for man to remember and be drawn closer to his Maker.

Sanctifying Time

Time is uniquely and integrally involved in human existence. It is a dimension that permeates the whole of creation as a part of the tri-universe that is wholly composed of energy, space, and time. Yahweh God, who exists beyond all time, initiated time when "in the beginning" he created. From the dawn of the creation, he ordained that the "lights in the firmament of the heaven" would serve to "divide the day from the night" and would be "for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years" (Genesis 1:14). While there are those throughout the community man who

minimize and even denigrate the value of special holy (set apart) times, days, and seasons, the truth is that God has always had them. The Holy Scriptures contain a virtual plethora of incidences in which God visited and/or performed special works on the times which he appointed in his Word.

Judaism and Christianity are religions which celebrate the great events of history. Much of the worship of both communities is focused on remembrance of God's mighty acts in history. It could be said, then, that they are religions of history and, therefore, of time. While the deities of the pagans were always associated with places and things, Yahweh has always been the God of events. While the ideal of Greek philosophy was to escape time and while the hope of Eastern Monism is to escape existence, Yahweh's religion is one of time and events and the hope of resurrection. Those who would engage themselves in Yahweh's religion must learn to appreciate and set apart time in order to remember what he has done and from those examples anticipate what he will do.

The reason for the continuing celebrations in remembrance of history is the fact that for Judaism and Christianity, time is not cyclical and causal—it is linear and covenantal. The religions outside the Judaeo-Christian tradition think of time as cyclical and causal, with the mindless wheel of fate and *karma* moving forward in never-ending repetition in which one event becomes the cause of the next which precipitates the next, *ad infinitum*. Judaism and Christianity perceive time as linear and covenantal—it starts somewhere (with divine creation) and ends somewhere (with the Messianic Age), and it is wholly dependent upon God's unilateral covenant(s) with his chosen people. We cannot function in the present or understand what we are to do in the future if we do not understand and celebrate the past.

An Appointment Calendar

Centuries ago, Yahweh outlined in the *Tenach* (Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament) an appointment calendar of the times on which he desired to meet with his people. It was on these times that he prescribed certain acts of divine service which were to be carried out by his people in praise and worship of him. This was God's liturgical calendar, an outline of special occasions on which his people were to meet with him and on which he would meet with them.

The festivals which God has outlined in his liturgical calendar are called *moedim*, the Hebrew word for appointments. "Let the children of Israel also keep the passover at his appointed season [*moed*] . . . but the man that . . . forbearth to keep the passover . . . shall be cut off from among his people: because he brought not the offering of the Lord in his *appointed season* . . ." (Numbers 9:2, 13). Obviously God considered the appointments on his calendar to be important to his people, for the penalty for willful neglect of his *moedim* was separation from Israel.

It is nothing short of amazing that people in the post-modern world who are so conscious of time and appointments should ignore and even disdain appointments that God, himself, has set. If one were granted an appointment to meet with the monarch, president, or prime minister of his nation, he would make extensive preparations to insure the fact that he was prepared and on time. How much more important is God, the Creator of the universe, than a temporal political figure! Should not believers exercise as much caution in meeting with God at the times that he has charted on his appointment calendar?

If man's evaluation of God's calendar relegates it to relative insignificance, Yahweh's intention concerning it was perfectly clear at the time at which he implemented it among his people: "And this day shall be unto you for a memorial: and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord *throughout your generations*; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance *for ever*" (Exodus 12:14). Since God, himself, left little doubt that his days of memorial would be observed by his people throughout their generations, *forever*, those who are Bible believers should certainly be searching the Word of God to discover the timing of God's days of memorial and the proper New Testament method of observing those days.

Rehearsals

The convocations that Yahweh enjoined upon Israel were also called *miqrot*, which means rehearsals. This also underscores an important truth about the days and seasons on the biblical liturgical calendar. They are both historical and prophetic. They were events of history, and they are propaedeutic of things to come. This is the definitive truth that Paul established in Colossians 2:16, 17: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are *a shadow of things to come*; but the body is of Christ." All holy days and sabbaths were shadows or pictures of greater things to come. Their reality is manifest in Christ. It is no mistake, then, that they are called rehearsals, which by nature are practices in preparation for the real performance. All of the biblical holy days are predictive of Jesus and are fulfilled in him. Until he came, they were rehearsals. When he came, the reality came on the world stage. After his manifestation of the reality, those festivals which he fulfilled become remembrance practices for believers. Those which remain to be fulfilled continue to be rehearsals for the time when the world stage will be set for the return of the Messiah.

Markers in Time

The first marker in time that God established for his people was a daily reminder, the hours of prayer. Coupled with the Judaic practice of repeating blessings to God for the occurrences of each day (over one hundred are possible), the hours of prayer give believers in God an opportunity to "rejoice evermore" and to "pray without ceasing," in everything giving thanks (I Thessalonians 5:16-18). There are three hours of prayer: morning, noon, and evening. The

morning hour of prayer (*Shacharit*) concurred with the morning sacrifice in the temple at 9 a.m. The Jewish people believe that Abraham introduced this prayer time. The noon hour of prayer (*Mincha*) is believed to have been introduced by Isaac. The evening (afternoon) hour of prayer (*Maariv*) coincided with the evening sacrifice in the temple and is believed to have been introduced by Jacob.

David declared the times of prayer: "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice" (Psalm 55:17). Daniel is famous for his faithful commemoration of these hours of prayer: "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees *three times a day*, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God" (Daniel 6:10). The Holy Spirit was given at the morning hour of prayer: "For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day [9 a.m.]" (Acts 2:15). The hours of prayer were a continuing part of the lifestyle of the apostles: "Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour [3 p.m.]" (Acts 3:1); "Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour [12 noon]" (Acts 10:9); Cornelius "saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day [3 p.m.] an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him . . . send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter. . ." (Acts 10:3-5).

The second marker in time was weekly, the Sabbath. It was God, himself, who set apart the Sabbath when at the conclusion of six days of creation, he rested on the seventh day (Genesis 2:2). God rested in order to establish a principle for the creation even though by his very nature he is indefatigable. One day in seven is needed for rest and restoration of what is expended in the six days of work. When he enjoined the remembrance of the Sabbath upon Israel, God's intent was that on that one day in seven his people would remember that their God had created the universe: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. . . for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day" (Exodus 20:8, 11). It was also a remembrance of Israel's redemption from slavery in Egypt: ". . . remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day" (Deuteronomy 5:15).

While the rest of the world trusted in their own labors and worked seven days a week, Israel was to trust in God by working six days and setting the Sabbath apart as a day of fellowship with family and God. Israel honored the God of creation and redemption. The church, by setting apart one day in seven, also honors the God of regeneration through the Messiah, who is the believer's rest, and it also underscores its expectation of the Messianic kingdom's millennium of rest (Hebrews 4:9). While we recognize the fact that the "Sabbath was made for man" and not vice versa and we underscore the fact that Jesus is "Lord of the Sabbath," we do understand that Sabbath is a memory device which confronts us weekly with the importance of setting one day in seven apart for interaction with God and our families.

The third marker in time was the new moon, which spoke to Israel of new beginnings each month and directed their attention to God as the source of everything that they enjoyed throughout the month.

The fourth marker in time was the seasonal festivals. These included Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. These gave the people opportunity to honor God at the important times of their harvest season.

The fifth marker in time was the Sabbatical year. For six years the land was to be cultivated; however, every seventh year, it was to lie fallow. This again was a statement of Israel's dependence upon God, not upon the land or upon themselves.

The sixth marker in time was the year of jubilee, which occurred after the cycle of seven Sabbath years was complete. It was the fiftieth year that signaled the release of all slaves, the settlement of debts, and the return of land to its owners. Again, this was a symbol of Israel's dependence upon God and of God's intention that freedom reign among his people.

Perhaps a seventh marker in time should be considered also—the Sabbatical Millennium, which the New Testament, particularly the Apocalypse, predicts as a time of rest for God and man during the Messianic Age of the kingdom of God.

All of these markers in time are parts of God's liturgical calendar for praise, worship, and service from his people. They represent important opportunities for man to meet with God at his *moedim* (appointed times).

Three Times A Year

The primary events on God's liturgical calendar are set forth in Exodus 23:14-17: "*Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month of Abib; for in it thou camest out of Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty:)* And the *feast of harvest*, the firstfruits of thy labors, which thou hast sown in the field: and the *feast of ingathering*, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labors out of the field. Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord."

There are, quite simply, only three festivals in each year which God specifically calls his "*Feasts*." The Hebrew word *chag* is employed only in reference to these three festivals: Passover (*Pesach*), Pentecost (*Shavout*), and Tabernacles (*Succot*). Originally these were called Unleavened Bread, Harvest, and Ingathering, respectively. While there are other times of celebration throughout the biblical year, there are in reality only three Feasts of Yahweh. This

fact certainly does not limit the application of the term *feast* to other times of memorial; however, it does underscore the relative importance of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles.

Throughout the Bible, God continually emphasized these three annual festivals. "The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep . . . And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end. *Thrice* in the year shall all your men-children appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel" (Exodus 34:18, 22, 23); "*Three times* in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles" (Deuteronomy 16:16).

In each of these Pentateuchal references, God clearly establishes and reiterates the requirements that all the males of Israel appear before the Lord three times each year. When the worship to God was established in the Temple in Jerusalem, this same liturgical calendar was employed by King Solomon: "Then Solomon offered burnt offerings unto the Lord on the altar of the Lord . . . on the solemn feasts, three times in the year, even in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles" (II Chronicles 8:13). This confirms the fact that God continued to place importance of Israel's observance of these three feasts: Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles.

It is perfectly fitting that three festivals should have prominence in the liturgical year. The numerical parallel is seen in the universe is actually a tri-universe composed entirely of energy, space, and time. It is also repeated in the three colors of light—red, yellow, and blue. It can be demonstrated in the three dimensions of space—length, width, and depth. And, of course it is a reflection of the three persons of God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Three Feasts of Yahweh

The three Feasts of Yahweh have often been termed Jewish festivals; however, this is a misnomer. The ownership of the feasts is clear. They are not Jewish feasts; they are Yahweh's feasts. "Concerning the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are *my feasts*" (Leviticus 23:2). Much of the church has used the term "Jewish festivals" as a means of relegating these feasts to inferior status or relative insignificance. The truth is that they are Yahweh's feasts. If the church is God's church, then God's feasts should be the church's festivals.

Since Israel was an agrarian society, it was only natural that God would establish his times of memorial in accordance with the agricultural seasons. The first festival, Passover, occurred in the first month at the beginning of the agricultural year, the beginning of Spring. The second festival, Pentecost, was celebrated at the end of Spring and the beginning of Summer. The third festival, Tabernacles, occurred in the seventh month at the end of the agricultural year in Autumn. The

timing of this sequence concurrent with the agricultural events, however, was not borrowed from some fertility rite of the Canaanite world. God chose Nisan (March-April) as the first month because it marked the timing of Israel's deliverance from Egypt. And, he chose the seventh month to end his liturgical year because seven is the number of perfection or completion.

The first of Yahweh's feasts is *Pesach*, the Feast of Passover, which occurred on the fourteenth day of Abib, the first month of the Jewish religious calendar, followed immediately by the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread. Initially, both Passover and Unleavened Bread were grouped under the heading of "Unleavened Bread" (Exodus 23:14-17; 34:18, 22, 23; Deuteronomy 16:16). This was a spring festival that occurred around the time of the vernal equinox. (The name of the month *Abib* means "ears"—referring to the earing of the ripening barley harvest.) During this time the Israelites removed all the leaven from their houses and partook of unleavened bread for eight days (seven days in addition to the day of Passover). As time progressed this entire festival came to be known as *Pesach*, the Feast of Passover. By the time of Ezekiel, it was described in this way: "In the first month, ye shall have the *passover*, a *feast of seven days*; unleavened bread shall be eaten" (Ezekiel 45:21). This was especially true in the time of Christ: "Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover" (Luke 22:1). The entire spring festival came to be included under the term *Passover*. Passover was the day for killing the lamb; however, it came to encompass also the seven days of unleavened bread.

The second of Yahweh's feasts was *Shavuot*, the Feast of Harvest. In other places in the scriptures, this festival was called the Feast of Weeks (Deuteronomy 16:10). In reality, it was a fifty-day festival which celebrated the counting of the *omer* from the day after the Sabbath after Passover until seven weeks were complete. Then, on the next day (the fiftieth day of the counting) the firstfruits of the wheat harvest were offered before God. Over time, this festival came to be known as the Feast of Pentecost, the name which is applied to it in Acts 2:1. The word *Pentecost* is the Greek word meaning the fiftieth (day).

The last of the three Feasts of Yahweh was *Succot*, the Feast of Tabernacles, called the Feast of Booths and the Feast of Ingathering. This festival was an autumnal event celebrating the completion of the harvest. At this time the Israelites lived in booths made of tree limbs and leaves, both recalling their bondage in Egypt and looking for the sign of the coming of the Messiah. This was the feast which Jesus observed at the temple in John 7. Tabernacles was called the Feast of Ingathering because it celebrated the end of the agricultural year when the entire harvest had been reaped.

There are, then, three Feasts of Yahweh, those three festival times which he made prominent in his liturgical calendar. The observance of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles was enjoined upon Yahweh's chosen people on a perpetual basis, forever. It is for this reason that these three feasts might be called the "forever feasts" of the Lord. (*Jesus was born on the feast of Tabernacles, He was crucified on Passover, rose on the first fruits, we received the ten commandments and the baptism on the feast of Pentecost.*) *Italics are mine.*

Seven Festivals In Three

In the events which were scripturally prescribed to occur at or around the times of the three Feasts of Yahweh, seven distinct individual memorial times were singled out by God to be a part of his liturgical calendar. These seven times are often called the seven feasts of the Lord.

The seven festivals are outlined in Leviticus 23, which serves as a complete delineation of God's liturgical calendar. "These are the feasts of the Lord, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons. [1] In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord's passover. . . . [2] And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread. . . . [3] When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the 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. . . . [4] 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. Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenths deals . . . they are the firstfruits unto the Lord. . . [5] In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation. . . . [6] Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be a holy convocation unto you. . . . [7] The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord" (Leviticus 23:4-6, 10, 11, 15-17, 24, 27, 34).

The Feast of Passover

The Passover was instituted as a yearly memorial and anamnesis of Israel's deliverance from Egypt, which was effected when the Lord passed through Egypt, destroying the firstborn of each family that had not applied the blood of the paschal lamb to the door posts and lintels of their houses. This was the last of the ten plagues which Yahweh had inflicted on Egypt, and it was the event which caused Pharaoh to relent and release the people from the bitter slavery they had endured for so many years. The complete story of this event is recorded in Exodus 12:3-11, 21-27.

For centuries the Jewish people obeyed the commandment of God and observed the Feast of Passover on the fourteenth day of Abib, the first month of the religious year. Under the full moon, each member of the nation of Israel remembered the supernatural deliverance wrought by Yahweh and considered himself personally to have been delivered from Egypt. In an unbroken line from the first Passover, the Jewish people have kept the commandment that God gave them to observe in perpetuity.

Since he was a devoted and observant Jew who diligently obeyed the commandments of God, Jesus maintained the tradition of Passover observance throughout his life. Indeed, in each of the three years of his ministry, he observed the Passover (John 2:23; 6:4; 13:1). Then on the night of his last celebration of the Passover, Jesus instituted a new memorial for the observance of Passover among his disciples. Since Jesus was the Lamb of God (John 1:29) who was to be offered on the very day of Passover to deliver the people from the bondage of sin and death (Matthew 26:2), he introduced a new celebration for Passover, commanding his disciples to recognize his body and blood in the unleavened bread and wine of the Passover and to partake of them in remembrance of his death until his return. It was the *matzoh* of the Passover that Jesus used to demonstrate his broken body, and it was the third of the four cups of Passover wine, the cup of redemption, that he used to demonstrate his shed blood. This ceremony was outlined in Luke 22:17-20 and confirmed in I Corinthians 11:23-26.

Jesus was the Passover Lamb (I Corinthians 5:7) who was slain from the foundation of the world in the eternal plan of God's salvation for man (Revelation 13:8). In the killing of an animal to cover the sin and nakedness of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:21), God had demonstrated the necessity for the shedding of blood for the remission of sins (Hebrews 9:22) and foreshadowed the time when the Lamb of God would be offered for the sins of the world (Hebrews 9:25-28; 10:10-14). In order to fulfill the Passover type, Jesus had to be spotless, free from sin, (Hebrews 4:15; 2:17,18), something which was accomplished in him through the things that he suffered (Hebrews 2:10).

The continuing observance of Passover was enjoined upon the church by Jesus, himself: "This do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). Paul further urged Passover observance upon the church, including the Gentiles, in his exhortation in I Corinthians 5:7,8: "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast . . . with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." Even after the separation of the church from the matrix of Judaism around the end of the first century, a large part of the church (among them Polycarp and Melito of Sardis) continued to observe Passover with communion on the fourteenth day of Abib, a fact which earned for them the appellation *Quartodecimians*, or "fourteeners," which the more Hellenistic Christians heaped upon them in derision. This observance of Passover continued in the Western church until 325 C.E. when the Roman Emperor Constantine proscribed the celebration of Passover with communion in his effort to purge the church of its Judaic heritage. It continued in the Eastern church until the eleventh century.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread

The Feast of Unleavened Bread began on the fifteenth day of Abib, immediately following the day of Passover and continued for seven days. During this time the people of Israel removed and kept leaven out of their houses, remembering the fact that when they were delivered from Egypt, they had not had time to allow for the leavening of their bread. Hence it was called "the bread of

haste." The first day of Unleavened Bread also celebrates the actual deliverance from Egypt which took place on the fifteenth day of Abib (Numbers 33:3).

By the time of the prophets, and particularly by the time of Christ, the Feast of Unleavened Bread had become so interconnected with the Feast of Passover that the entire eight days of unleavened bread came to be called the Passover, with the paschal event becoming the focus of the entire week of devotion to Yahweh.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread symbolized the complete work of Christ that removes sin from the lives of believers. Leaven in the New Testament is symbolic of sin and false teaching (e.g., the leaven of Herod and of the Pharisees [Mark 8:15], the leaven of malice and wickedness [I Corinthians 5:6-8], the leaven of legalism [Galatians 5:9]). The interconnection of the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Passover clearly demonstrates the need for atonement which removes sin from the lives of believers. The fact that the removal of leaven is both an event of one day and of seven additional days helps us to understand that believers in Christ initially have sin removed from their lives by the shed blood of the Passover Lamb and that the purification process is one which extends through time in a sanctification process which is manifest in obedience to the Word of God (John 17:17; Ephesians 5:26).

The traditional Jewish ceremony of the removal of leaven in each home is a good example of how God removes sin from the lives of believers in Jesus. After the house is completely cleaned and all dishes and utensils have been boiled or passed through fire, the mother hides ten pieces of leavened bread in the house and encourages the children to find those pieces. The children, however, are not permitted to touch the pieces of leaven when they discover them but bring their father to remove them from the house. The father takes a feather and a wooden spoon and gently removes the leaven from the house and later burns it with fire (usually at the synagogue). God, our Father, encourages us, his children, to examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith (I Corinthians 11:28; II Corinthians 13:5) and to discover the secret sin in our lives (Psalm 19:12). We, however, may not remove the sin. Only our Father can remove it and cast it into the lake of fire, never to be remembered against us. And, he does so with extreme gentleness, for "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive all of our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).

The New Testament church's celebration of the Feast of Unleavened Bread emphasized the purification of the inner man, the removal of sin and unrighteousness from the lives of those who had received the Passover in Christ. This is the clear message of I Corinthians 5:8: "Therefore let us keep the feast . . . with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

The Feast of Firstfruits

The third of the seven feasts is the Feast of Firstfruits. This was the time for celebration of the firstfruits of the barley harvest in the land of Israel. Details of the commandments for observance of this festival are found in Leviticus 23:19-14. At this time of the year, according to tradition, the high priest went into the barley field in the evening as the first day of the week immediately following Passover began and plucked up a sheaf of the barley. (The timing of this event was at sundown on the Sabbath, since the Hebrew day begins at sundown, with each day recognized as "the evening [first] and [then] the morning" as in Genesis 1:5.) This sheaf was then kept in the temple until the time of the morning sacrifice on that same first day of the week, at which time the high priest waved the sheaf before the Lord as a firstfruits offering of thanks for the harvest.

The rich symbolism of this yearly Judaic festival is readily demonstrated in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. There can be no doubt that Jesus was resurrected sometime between the end of the Sabbath (sundown Saturday) and sunrise on Sunday, for when the women came to the tomb at sunrise on the first day of the week "while it was yet dark" (John 20:1), they found that the tomb was already empty. While there is no concrete evidence in the scriptural record to establish the fact that Jesus resurrected at a particular time of day, the shadow of the events in the Feast of Firstfruits surely gives us a suggestion that the Lord Jesus could well have resurrected at the time at which the high priest plucked up the wave sheaf of the barley harvest from the field. When the risen Lord appeared to Mary Magdalene on the following morning, he would not permit her to touch him, saying, "I am not yet ascended to my Father" (John 20:17). No doubt, Jesus ascended to the Father in order to wave the firstfruits of the resurrection before him at the hour of the morning sacrifice when the high priest waved the sheaf in the temple.

Perhaps it is more than a coincidence of the language of scripture that Jesus is called by the apostle Paul "the firstfruits" of the resurrection in I Corinthians 15:23 when he speaks of the order (perhaps chronological) of the resurrection. The historical fact that Jesus was resurrected (witnessed by over five hundred people, many of whom accepted martyrdom rather than deny their testimony) stands as a firstfruits symbol of the bounty of the resurrection in which all believers will be resurrected at the end of the age. Just as the wave sheaf represented the bulk of the harvest to come, so the resurrection of Jesus represents the resurrection which is come.

There is evidence that at the time of the passion and resurrection of Jesus, some of the saints who had died were resurrected (Matthew 27:52). This, no doubt, was emblematic of the event which occurred at that time when Jesus descended into the heart of the earth, to *hades*, and led captivity captive (Ephesians 4:8, 9) by preaching to the spirits who were imprisoned in the grave (I Peter 3:19), those over whom death had reigned supreme (Romans 5:14), and delivering them from the power of death. Perhaps it was not only himself but also these whom he led captive into the heavenlies that Jesus waved as the new Melchizedek High Priest before his Father in heaven.

The Feast of Pentecost

The Feast of Pentecost was celebrated fifty days after the spring festival season, hence its name. It was a festival which began on the morning after the sabbath after Passover and concluded on the morning after seven additional sabbaths had passed, or fifty days later. The day of Pentecost was "fully come" (Acts 2:1). It was a festival of celebration for the wheat harvest, which featured a firstfruits offering of two loaves of bread that were waved before the Lord.

There is much controversy as to the date of the celebration of the Feast of Pentecost, also called the Feast of Weeks or the Feast of Harvest. The Sadducean party maintained a literal rendering of the Pentateuchal references to Pentecost by saying that the first day of the Feast of Weeks was the morning after the weekly Sabbath after Passover (Leviticus 23:11). The Pharisees, who were the founders of Rabbinical Judaism, believed that the first day of the Pentecost (the fifty days) was on the morning after the first day of Unleavened Bread or the morning after the annual Sabbath of the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Others (notably the Samaritans) believed that the first day of Pentecost should be on the morning after the last day of Unleavened Bread. Still others believed that it should occur on the morning after the weekly Sabbath after the entire Feast of Unleavened Bread. In all likelihood, the position of the Sadducees was more accurate scripturally, so that the day when "Pentecost was fully come" (Acts 2:1), was always on Sunday, fifty days after the Sunday following the weekly Sabbath after Passover.

Pentecost has been historically celebrated by the Israelites as the anniversary of the giving of the law. It was surely in this time frame that Moses ascended up into the mountain and received the tablets of the law. Since the people of Israel so loved the Torah of Yahweh, Pentecost became a time for rejoicing in the covenantal provision of God for their order and well being. (There is little evidence that this tradition predates the third century C.E. in Judaism. Rabbinical scholars may have taken their cue from Christian leaders who pointed to the giving of the law on Pentecost as parallel to the giving of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.)

It was only fitting, then, that when another of the great events in the lives of believers in Jesus as Messiah occurred, it coincided with the day of Pentecost. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come . . . they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4). The great endowment of the Holy Spirit which was to empower the believers for service both as witnesses to Christ and as overcomers and fulfillers of the law of God was poured out upon the church on the day of Pentecost. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ came on the anniversary of the giving of the Torah law.

The purpose of the Holy Spirit was to empower the believers to gather disciples to form the church. The rich symbolism of the loaves of bread that were offered as firstfruits of Pentecost is readily seen in the fact that the church is recognized as one bread (I Corinthians 10:17), millions of particles of flour baked together into one loaf. The fact that there were two identical loaves in the offering of Pentecost indicates that God would make the one offering of the church from two bodies of people, Jews and Gentiles (Ephesians 3:6).

That the early church continued to observe the Feast of Pentecost is seen in the determination of Paul to be in Jerusalem for Pentecost (Acts 20:16) and in his reckoning his travel schedule by Pentecost (I Corinthians 16:8). No doubt, this was a celebration of the great event that had occurred on that first New Testament Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was given.

The Feast of Trumpets

The Feast of Trumpets occurred on the first day of the month of Tishri, the seventh month of the Jewish religious calendar and the first month of the civil calendar. This day is considered the New Year for Jews throughout the world (*Rosh Hashanah*—meaning literally, "head of the year"). Trumpets also signaled the end of the agricultural harvest season, when all of the fruits and grains of the field had been harvested. It heralded the beginning of the second great time of festivity in the nation of Israel, a season which came exactly six months after the Passover season.

The day of the Feast of Trumpets was a new moon, a time of the "memorial of blowing of trumpets" and a "holy convocation" of the people (Leviticus 23:24). The purpose of the Feast of Trumpets was to call all of Israel to attention in preparation for the forthcoming Day of Atonement, the highest and holiest day of the Jewish year, which followed on the tenth of Tishri. Israel took this time as a ten day period of introspection and evaluation of individual conduct over the preceding year.

The theme of the blowing of trumpets is a recurring *leitmotif* that is seen throughout the Bible. Joel 2:1: "Blow the trumpet in Zion", I Corinthians 15:52: ". . .the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible. . .", and Revelation 8:6: "And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound", along with many other passages of scripture, reveal the continuing work of the blowing of trumpets in the midst of God's people throughout the ages.

The biblical trumpet was the shofar, the ram's horn. At each occasion when the shofar was blown, it called Israel's attention back to the *Akidah*, the binding of Isaac, and the substitutionary ram that God provided. The principles of vicarious atonement and substitutionary righteousness that have always been foundational to Judaism and Christianity have been underscored with each soul-piercing blast of the shofar.

While there is no specific reference to the observance of the Feast of Trumpets in the New Testament, the fact that Jesus participated in the Feast of Tabernacles celebration is indicative of the fact that both he and the nascent church continued to honor this biblical ordinance. No doubt, the gospel theme of the call to repentance and restitution was an appropriate message for this time of self examination and repentance in Israel.

The Day of Atonement

The Day of Atonement was and is the highest and holiest day of the biblical liturgical calendar (Leviticus 23:27). The events of that day are detailed in Leviticus 16:7-16, 29, 30. The fact that the Day of Atonement was celebrated on the tenth day of Tishri is strikingly parallel to the fact that the Paschal lamb was set apart on the tenth day of Abib in the Passover season. The unique sacrifice which was offered on this day involved two goats, one called the Yahweh goat and the other the scapegoat. Of the two, one was chosen by lot to be the blood sacrifice to Yahweh for the sins of the high priest and all of the nation of Israel. The other goat became the scapegoat, the one upon which the sins of the people were confessed by the high priest. In laying his hands upon the head of the goat, he transferred the guilt of Israel to the goat, which was subsequently sent into the Judean desert, bearing the sins of the people outside the camp of Israel.

While the sacrifice of Jesus took place on Passover, there are still profound similarities between his offering of himself for the sins of all mankind and the ceremony which took place on the Day of Atonement. Jesus was both the Yahweh goat who provided the blood of atonement and the scapegoat who bore the sins of all the world upon himself and took them outside the camp of the peoples of the earth into *hades* itself (John 18:14; Hebrews 13:12). Since Jesus is the once and for all time atonement (Hebrews 9:26), his death forever fulfilled the sacrificial elements of the Day of Atonement. There is no further need of another sacrifice, for the offering is complete in the body of Jesus.

The Feast of Tabernacles

The Feast of Tabernacles is the climax of Yahweh's liturgical calendar. It was called the Feast of Ingathering, for it was the time of rejoicing over the completion of the harvest in Israel. The fact that this festival began on the fifteenth day of the month of Tishri (at the full moon) is also parallel with the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread on the fifteenth day of Abib (at the full moon). Both the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Feast of Tabernacles began their celebrations on the two days of the year when night and day are equal, for they were on the day (and night) of the full moon at the time of the vernal equinox (Unleavened Bread) and the autumnal equinox (Tabernacles).

The Feast of Tabernacles is discussed in Exodus 23:16 and in Leviticus 23:39-43. Historically Israel dwelt in booths, brush arbors constructed of tree limbs and other foliage, that served as reminders of their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. Tabernacles was also remembered as the time on which Solomon dedicated the Temple of Yahweh in Jerusalem, one of the most celebrated events in Jewish national history.

There is some evidence in scripture that Jesus may have been born at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. It is commonly held that the ministry of Jesus was of three and one-half years in

duration (calculated according to the number of Passovers which Jesus celebrated), and that it began at the time of his thirtieth birthday. Since it is certain that Jesus was crucified at Passover, if he were thirty-three and one-half years old at his death, then he must have been born at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, six months before the Feast of Passover. Tabernacles may well have been the fulness of time (Galatians 4:4) at which the Lord Jesus chose to become *tabernacled* with men (John 1:14).

It has also been suggested that since the temple of Solomon was dedicated at the Feast of Tabernacles, the establishment of the church with the ordination of the twelve apostles also occurred during the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. It would certainly be appropriate that two parallel events would have occurred within the same time frame on Yahweh's liturgical calendar.

The Feasts Reveal God's Salvation Plan

One of the clear statements of Holy Scripture is that the festivals (holy days) foreshadowed events of the New Testament era. Colossians 2:16, 17 tells us that "holy days . . . or sabbath days . . . are shadows of things to come, but the body [reality] is of Christ." Coupled with Hebrews 10:1: ". . . the law [has] a shadow of good things to come. . .", this Pauline statement should help us to understand that the festivals of Judaism are very much a part of the Christian heritage and speak profoundly to us of the Jewish carpenter whom we recognize as Messiah and Lord. Quite simply, the Jewish festivals are pictures (shadows) that help us to understand the life, ministry, death, resurrection, ascension, and second coming of Jesus more clearly. The three major feasts, Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, speak to us of the comprehensive plan of God for the New Testament era.

Just as the liturgical calendar is divided into three segments of time for celebration, so the New Testament era is divided into three prophetic times. The profound conjunction of these prophetic events with the order of the liturgical calendar can be no accident. That they are a part of the divine purpose is readily apparent. It is exactly as Paul and the writer of Hebrews teach: the sabbaths and festivals of the Torah are prophetic symbols which adumbrate the reality that is seen in Christ and the church (Colossians 2:16,17; Hebrews 10:1).

The Passover season was celebrated with three interrelated festivals—Passover, Unleavened Bread, and Firstfruits. Pentecost is the festival that stands alone in the midst of the agricultural year. The Tabernacles season is celebrated with three interrelated festivals—Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Tabernacles. It is no coincidence that the greatest events of the New Testament era are found at its beginning and at its ending, with a long period of time interposed.

The New Testament time began with the offering of the Paschal Lamb, Jesus Christ, on the cross of Golgotha to provide atonement—a means by which God, himself, could pass over the sins of mankind and allow those who believe to live. The fact that Jesus died on the day of Passover is confirmation that the event which signaled the beginning of the New Testament was the Passover, just as it had signaled the beginning of the Old Testament era with Israel's deliverance from Egypt. The accompanying fulfillments of the two adjunct festivals are also seen in the work of Christ. First, the removal of leaven (Unleavened Bread) from the one bread of the God's congregation (church) was accomplished through his offering of himself. Secondly, his resurrection from the grave on the day of Firstfruits signaled the confirmation of the hope of resurrection and the means of resurrection in him: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25).

Then, literally fifty days after the resurrection of Jesus, the church was endued with the power of the Holy Spirit on the very day of Pentecost, a fact that was witnessed by Jewish people from many nations of the world who had gathered at Jerusalem for the feast. This was the empowerment which enabled the church to go forth to witness of Christ's resurrection and to build up the body of Christ, his church (Acts 1:8). This work has continued to this day with the church still laboring to complete the "harvest" of souls that will signal the prophetic fulfillment of the Feast of Pentecost. While Pentecost ends literally fifty days after the Feast of Firstfruits, the theme of harvest continues until the time of the Feast of Tabernacles; hence this time interposed between Passover and Tabernacles represents the gathering of the church.

Since Tabernacles is the end of the harvest, it can be expected that this season should represent the end of the spiritual harvest. Jesus rightly said, "The harvest is the end of the age" (Matthew 13:39). The harvest is at the culmination of the era of divine grace, the time when Jesus will return to establish his Messianic Kingdom on earth. It is the time of the consummation of all things. Just as Passover had three interrelated festivals that were fulfilled in the beginning of the New Testament era, so Tabernacles has three interrelated festivals that will be fulfilled at its end. These events are clearly set forth in the eschatological teachings of both the *Tenach* (Old Testament) and the New Testament.

The first work that must be accomplished near the end of the age is the Feast of Trumpets, the awakening of the church, the kingdom of God, and the nation of Israel both spiritually and prophetically to the nearness of the *eschaton*. The trumpet will be blown both in the church and in Israel ("Blow the trumpet in Zion."—Joel 2:1). It will be a time for awakening the sleeping kingdom of God (Matthew 25:6). All the people of the earth will be urged to make preparation for the impending return of the Lord Jesus in what will be heart-rending time of universal trouble and conflict the likes of which the world has never seen. The nations of the world will be called upon to repent, and they will be judged of God by the manner in which they react to the church and to the people of Israel.

The second great prophetic work which will be accomplished in this time near the end of the age will be the salvation of the nation of Israel, a national day of atonement for those who are God's chosen people according to the flesh. In this time the promises of God to Abraham and the patriarchs will be fulfilled when the fountain for sin is opened to the entire house of Israel (Zechariah 12:10; 13:1, 6), an event which Zechariah predicts as an immediate antecedent of the coming of the Lord (Zechariah 14:1). In Romans 9:27 and 11:26, Paul predicted the salvation of all of Israel, the remnant that remain in the land at the time of the return of Christ. They will look upon him who was pierced and mourn for him as for an only son (Zechariah 12:10). Again, this event will occur during great tribulation. The great irony of the wisdom of God will be manifest at this time when he will use the Gentile church to stand with Israel and in effect bring his mercy to Israel to provoke them to receive Messiah (Romans 11:11, 31).

Finally, the Feast of Tabernacles will be fulfilled when Jesus, himself, returns from heaven to establish his Judaic kingdom on earth for a millennium. This is the reason that the great festival which will be celebrated throughout the world during the reign of Christ is the Feast of Tabernacles, the feast that has been designed for both Jews and Gentiles (Zechariah 14:16). The second coming of the Messiah, the seal of his prophetic promise, will be memorialized annually at Tabernacles throughout the duration of his reign.

Tabernacles is also called ingathering. The prophetic significance of this event is noted throughout the New Testament. The coming of Messiah represents a time of ingathering of all the righteous harvest of the earth into God's barn, for "the harvest is the end of the age" (Matthew 13:39). He is the one like the Son of man on the cloud who will "thrust in [*his*] sickle, and reap . . . for the harvest of the earth is ripe" (Revelation 14:14, 15). The reapers are the angels (Matthew 13:39) to whom Jesus gives the order at the culmination of this age to "gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matthew 24:31). This is the explicit reason for the return of our Lord: "If I go . . . I will come again, and *receive you unto myself*" (John 14:3).

The coming of Jesus signals that event for which we who are believers and, indeed, all of creation has sought: the resurrection and the change (Romans 8:22, 23). "The dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thessalonians 4:16, 17), and "the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (I Corinthians 15:52). This is the event which Paul describes as "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and . . . our gathering together unto him" (II Thessalonians 2:1). It is the event that takes place "in the dispensation of the fulness of times" when he will "gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth . . ." (Ephesians 1:10).

Since Tabernacles is the end of the agricultural year, it symbolizes the end of the gospel era, the time when all the righteous of the earth, both Jew and Gentile, will be resurrected to stand with

the Messiah upon the mountain of the Lord (Zechariah 14:4). Subsequently, every nation of the earth will be required to commemorate the Feast of Tabernacles annually (Zechariah 14:16-17).

The Jewish people have long believed that the Festival of Tabernacles is for both Jews and Gentiles. This season gives every Christian an excellent opportunity to join with Jewish friends in celebrating God's overthrow of the evil of human slavery. We can take this time to pray for men and women who even today are viewed as subhuman and are dominated by unrighteous political systems that exploit and enslave them. We can also celebrate the fact that we have been delivered from an even more onerous slavery, the bondage to sin, through the emancipation that occurred for us when we received God's perfect sacrifice for sin, Jesus the Messiah. And, we can join with the Jewish people in anxious anticipation of the coming of the Messiah and the age of peace that he will bring. Indeed, we can exclaim, "Maranatha!", and we can say with John, "Come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).

Festivals and the Menorah

An excellent mnemonic device that will enable everyone to remember the seven festivals as being divided into three time frames under the heading of three feasts is to superimpose them upon the Menorah, which has three divisions: three lamps on one side, one lamp in the middle, and three lamps on the other side. There are three festivals in the beginning of the agricultural year: Passover, Unleavened Bread, and Firstfruits. Then, there is one festival in the middle of the agricultural year: Pentecost. Finally, there are three festivals in the end of the agricultural year: Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Tabernacles. (Interestingly enough, one could continue the analogy by adding the Jewish feast of Purim to one side and the feast of Hanukkah to the other, and the result would be a nine-branched Hanukkah candlestick!) Again, the seven festivals can be seen witnessed in the seven colors of the rainbow, the seven days of the week, the seven notes of the musical scale, and others. Seven is the number of perfection or completion; therefore, it is altogether appropriate that Yahweh's liturgical calendar should feature seven festivals.

Festivals in the Apocalypse

The uniqueness of this parallel is established in the fact that it is clearly seen in the one great document which is described as a panorama of the New Testament era, the Book of Revelation. John was told by Jesus that he was to "write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter" (Revelation 1:19), three categories of events which make up the new dispensation. The things that John had seen were witnessed by John in his gospel: the life, death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. He talked briefly about them in Revelation 1:5-8. Interestingly enough, when Jesus appeared in his post-resurrection splendor to John on Patmos, he was seen "in the midst of seven golden candlesticks." Could it be that the

positioning of the Son of Man in the middle of the Menorah was emblematic of the fact that three of the branches represented the things which "thou hast seen," the one candlestick in which he was standing represented "the things which are," and the three candlesticks on his other side represented "the things which shall be hereafter" ? At the time at which Jesus appeared to John, the prophetic program of God was indeed in the midst of the middle of the fourth candlestick, the fourth feast, Pentecost. Chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation deal with the call of the church to right relationship with God and to reconfirmation of its commission in the earth as the body of Christ. The observant reader could rightly expect to find the remainder of the Book of Revelation to be a description of the events of the final three branches of the candlestick or the final three festivals. And so it is!

There is no more detailed and complete description of the events of the "last days" than that of John's apocalypse. While hints of these truths are seen throughout the entire Bible, John's revelation is a digest of eschatological truth. It is no coincidence that the entire Book of Revelation represents instant replays in various settings of the same prophetic scenario. It begins with trumpets (also seen as seals and vials), and it ends with the bodily return of Jesus Christ and the establishment of his earthly kingdom. Interposed in these scenarios is national Israel passing through a time of trouble along with the church (Revelation 7, 12, 14), including the sealing of 144,000 of Israel (the Day of Atonement fulfillment). The end result of the apocalypse is the proclamation of the kingdom of God, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men" (Revelation 21:3), a clear parallel with the prophetic fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles. It is readily apparent that if one lays the seven feasts of Yahweh across the Book of Revelation, there is a perfect match, beginning with Passover and ending with Tabernacles.

Can there be any doubt, then, that the liturgical calendar of Yahweh's feasts that has been commemorated for centuries is in reality a prophetic appointment book that reveals in chronological order the events of the New Testament era, which both begins with a Jewish feast and ends with a Jewish feast. Could it be that the revival throughout the Christian community of interest in the restoration of the Judaic roots of the gospel is merely preparation for the return of the Jewish Messiah and the establishment of the Judaic kingdom of God upon earth when all the nations of the world will celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles each year in commemoration of the return of the Lord of glory to reign with his church over the whole earth!

New Testament Observances

While most Christian theologians have posited that God's remembrance system was destroyed in Christ, this was never Paul's contention. As a matter of fact in I Corinthians 5:7, 8 we find him encouraging Gentile believers to celebrate the festival of unleavened bread (Passover) because "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." This statement, coupled with Colossians 2:16, 17 (where Paul declares that "holy days . . . or sabbath days . . . are shadows of things to come, but the body [reality] is of Christ") should help us to understand that the festivals of Judaism are very much a part of the Christian heritage.

The Feasts of Yahweh were perpetual, eternal observances. With the advent of Jesus Christ and the introduction of the New Testament, God did not abandon his liturgical calendar. It was, by the authority of his Word, to remain in force forever. The worship of God, however, was taken out of the remembrance of physical deliverance and thanks for physical sustenance and was placed in the realm of the spiritual. In the New Testament era the Feasts of Yahweh served both as times of memorial on God's liturgical calendar and as shadows of the reality of grace.