



The Church of God International

HOME BIBLE

Study Course

17

Understanding The Sanctified and Unsanctified Feasts

Doctrinal Statement

The annual holy days were ordained by God, kept by the ancient Israelites, and continued by the early New Testament Christians. These seven annual "appointed feasts" picture God's plan of salvation for mankind.

Many of the teachings and holidays of traditional Christian churches are incompatible with biblically based doctrine. While the sincerity or motives of those who hold these beliefs is not questioned, it is essential to plainly state the teachings associated with these "unsanctified holidays" contrasts sharply with what the Church of God, International teaches as original biblical truth.

Just as the Church of God keeps the weekly Sabbath, the Church of God also observes the annual Holy Days that were ordained by God, kept by the ancient Israelites and continued by the early New Testament Christians. These seven annual "appointed feasts" picture God's plan of salvation for man.

Jesus Christ, while here on earth in the flesh preached the New Testament gospel. Never during his earthly ministry did He observe the temporary customs of the law of Moses. Christ never once offered an animal sacrifice.

However, Jesus certainly did observe His Father's annual Holy Days (John 7:2, 10, 14, 37). The example was set for all time for all people. The apostle John was inspired to write: "He that saith he abideth in Him (*Jesus Christ*) ought himself also so to walk, even as He (*Christ*) walked" (1 John 2:6). We must not carelessly assume it makes no difference whether or not we observe these days.

Sanctified Days of God

The Creator of the whole Universe and all that is in it, is a Holy and Righteous God. Because He is a Holy God, sin is too serious to just be shrugged off and forgotten. God is a lawful God, therefore, the debt must be settled and the books balanced. For forgiveness to be possible for us, the debt we have incurred by sinning, must be paid for. Someone has to suffer the penalty of death in our place, if we are to live.

Jesus Christ paid this death penalty for us. God our Father, loved the whole world so much that He was willing to allow the life of His own son to be sacrificed to pay the debt that no

one was capable of paying and still live (John 3:16). God's Holy character is so consistent that there could be no other way for Him to extend mercy to us.

To those who accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, obedience to all that He taught is necessary and of paramount importance. Jesus spoke to His disciples and told them, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have *commanded* you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world (*age*)" (Matthew 28:20).

When the New Testament is read it will be found that Jesus Christ, His apostles and disciples never observed Sunday, Christmas, Easter, Lent, or Halloween as days of worship. In fact you will not find them even mentioned in the Bible except as pagan ceremonies not to be taken part in. It is for this reason - and many more - that the Church of God continues to observe the Seventh Day Sabbath and Holy Days instituted by the Lord God, and these it will be found are mentioned prolifically in the Bible. In scholarship it is widely acknowledged that the early Church continued to observe the annual holy days of the Old Testament: "In the early Christian Church the propriety of celebrating the festivals together with the whole of the Jewish people was never questioned, so that it needed no special mention" (The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, vol. 1 628).

The annual Holy Days are named: the *Passover*, *Feast of Unleavened Bread*, *Pentecost*, the *Feast*

of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles, followed by the Last Great Day. These annual Holy Days function in a similar manner as the weekly Sabbath in that they outline God's plan of salvation for the individual and the world. Like the weekly Sabbath, each is reckoned from sunset to sunset. A complete summary of the Sabbath and the Holy days of the Lord will be found in (Leviticus 23:1-36).

Sabbath: The Church of God continues to observe the seventh-day Sabbath as did Jesus and the New Testament Church. The Sabbath was established by God at Creation week, and it was made for man, reaffirmed by Jesus, taught by the apostles and kept down through the centuries. "And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made" (Genesis 2:3). The Sabbath (literally rest) day was incorporated in the Mosaic covenant with Israel in a special way, but it preceded Israel and will continue eternally. "And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, *shall all flesh* come to worship before me, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 66:23).

"For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the Seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it" (Exodus 20:11). You will find that God wrote His commandments with His own finger in stone (Exodus 31:18).

The most important New Testament statement on the Sabbath was spoken by Jesus Christ. "And He said unto them. The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath: Therefore the son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27-28).

Obviously, the Sabbath was made for man's spiritual and physical benefit. It provides the means for loving God and worshiping Him in spirit and in truth. Another important feature of observing the Sabbath is it makes apparent that the true Creator God is being worshiped as He prescribes, and

not as some "god" - made from the imagination of the mind of man.

Passover: The Bread and Wine which Jesus instituted at His last supper (and which are taken yearly by the members of the Church today) are explained symbolically both by Jesus Himself and by the apostle Paul. The wine represents the shed blood of Jesus who gave Himself as an offering to pay for all the sins of mankind. John records for us, "...Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). That full and complete sacrifice makes it possible for one to have any and all sins forgiven upon repentance. The wine also represents the New Covenant made between God and the Christian by the blood of Christ.

The bread represents the body of Jesus which was torn and beaten for us all, in Christ's ultimate sacrifice for mankind. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John 6:51). For a fuller understanding read all of John chapter six. The eating of the bread and the drinking of the wine represents partaking of the eternal life which only God can give. The beaten body of Christ also represents the stripes He took on His back enabling us to claim the gift of divine healing for our physical infirmities (Isaiah 53:4-5; 1 Peter 2:24).

The purpose of the foot washing ceremony is explained by Jesus Himself, as showing true humility and the proper sense of service (John 13:12-17). No one can be greater than His Lord, who is Jesus Christ; yet Jesus was the greatest servant of all, and gave more than anyone else for mankind. This Spirit of Christian love and service is expressed symbolically by washing another person's feet and then allowing that person to reciprocate. Thus, the Passover represents Christ's sacrifice for all - both the individual and the world - and pictures the initial step in salvation. Only through acceptance for this sacrifice can one repent and be forgiven. Repentance is the first stage in individual conversion.

The Feast of Unleavened

Bread: This Feast is symbolic of the continual removing of sin from the spiritual sphere of one's life and the continual practicing of a new godly way of life, represented by Christ who was "unleavened", that is, without sin. The apostle Paul stated, "Purge out therefore the old leaven, (sin) that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7).

As the Hebrews prepared for their exodus from slavery in Egypt, they were commanded to prepare bread without yeast - "unleavened bread" - because they didn't have time to wait for it to rise. Yeast also was a symbol of sin, so they were commanded to clean all of it out of their houses (Exodus 12:15; 13:7). Therefore, today as a symbol of sin, followers of Christ remove yeast from their houses during this festival as a physical reminder of removing sin from their lives. It is a further reminder that we should have nothing to do with the sins of the past "old leaven".

The Old Testament Passover lamb was slaughtered on the 14th of Nisan. It was eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs (representing hard bondage) on into the evening. That night, the angel that brings death "passed over" (spared) the Israelites, who had put the blood of the lamb on the door posts, and slaughtered the Egyptian firstborn. This began a period of seven days of eating unleavened bread. The 15th and the 21st days were Holy Days on which no work was to be done. The intervening days were not holy days, but no leaven was to be eaten or any leavened products to be in the houses. It was on the Sunday (during this period) that the first sheaf (omer) of the new harvest was offered as the Wave Sheaf offering. Jesus Christ is the Wave Sheaf offering! Only after this offering could the spring harvest begin (Leviticus 23:6-14).

Pentecost (Feast of Weeks):

This festival took its name from the manner in which it was determined. Rather than being celebrated on a particular calendar day, it was counted

seven weeks (or fifty days) from the Wave Sheaf Day that occurred during the days of Unleavened Bread, hence the term "Feast of Weeks" in the Old Testament and "Pentecost" (Greek "fiftieth") in the time of the New Testament. It marked the end of the spring harvest. The basic instructions for determining the date of Pentecost are clear in (Leviticus 23:15-16). The count begins on a Sunday and ends on a Sunday. The New Testament Church of God began on the Day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit came according to the promises Jesus had made. "But ye shall receive 'Power' after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you" (Acts 1:8). "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 might wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting" (Acts 2:1-2).

The *Sheaf* had to be made up of the "firstfruits," the very first of the harvest to be reaped. The Sheaf had to be offered first before the rest of the harvest because it symbolically represented Christ. "Christ [is] risen from the dead, and become the **Firstfruits** of them that slept" (1 Corinthians 15:20). The apostle James tells us "Of His own will begat He us with the word of Truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures (James 1:18). Therefore, Pentecost, or Firstfruits portrays to us the first part of the spiritual harvest of souls, the calling out God's Church, a small group of people and a small first harvest.

Feast of Trumpets: Trumpets were an instrument often used to sound the alarm for war (Jeremiah 4:19; Ezekiel 33:1-16). In speaking of the end time, Jesus Himself said, "and except those days be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (Matthew 24:22).

This festival, the *Feast of Trumpets*, portrays the time of world war in the near future, and the intervention of Jesus Christ, not only to raise the dead in the first resurrection, but to save humanity from total destruction (Revelation 11:18).

The Day of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah) symbolizes the "Resurrection" of all who died in Christ and the change of all who will be living in Christ. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the Last Trump: for the Trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Corinthians 15:52). "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout with the voice of the archangel, and with the Trump of God: and the dead shall rise first (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

Day of Atonement: *Yom Kippur*, is a most important day. The basic idea of Atonement is a "covering" of sin; the purpose is to accomplish reconciliation between man and God. "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2). In the New Testament the Day of Atonement was referred to as the "Fast" (Acts 27:9). The Fast was on the tenth day of the seventh month (Leviticus 23:27).

The Day of Atonement is a time of introspection, as well as learning lessons by considering our past. God has given us the gift of life and Salvation. "...While we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). "... We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom we have now received the Atonement" (Romans 5:11; 2 Corinthians 5:18-21).

Feast of Tabernacles: During the Millennium (which the Feast pictures), all the tribes of Israel will keep the Feast (Hosea 12:8,9). All nations will be compelled to join with Israel in the keeping of the Feast of Tabernacles (Zechariah 14:16-19; Isaiah 66:23). A Tabernacle is a temporary dwelling. God commanded the Israelites to live in temporary huts or booths for seven days during this feast. The purpose was to remind the Israelites of their forty year sojourn in the wilderness and deserts south of Palestine (Leviticus 23:42-43). Today we stay in hotels and motels during the feast. The feast reminds us that our bodies are temporary "Tabernacles" as it did Peter when he wrote, "Yea I think it meet, as

long as I am in this tabernacle, (body) to stir you up by putting you in remembrance, knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me" (2 Peter 1:13). Satan the Devil will be bound - unable to deceive the nations for a thousand years (millennium) (Revelation 20:1-3).

Last Great Day: After the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles, there is an eighth day called in the New Testament, "the last day, that *Great Day of the Feast*." "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:37-38). See also (Leviticus 23:36). At the beginning of the millennium the beast and false prophet were cast into the Lake of Fire. At the end of the millennium, after being loosed for a little season, Satan is cast into the Lake of fire (Revelation 20:11). Also, at the end of the millennium, the rest of the dead that did not come up in the first resurrection - who never had an opportunity to hear the gospel - stand before God at the Great White Throne. No one will be left out, and they will be "judged out of those things written in the books, according to their works" (Revelation 20:11-12).

The Sanctified Days are Feasts of the Lord, not "of the Jews" or "of man". They are to be kept forever, (Leviticus 23:1-2).

The Holy Days were ordained before the sacrifices and burnt offerings were given. The sacrifices and burnt offerings were not given until one year after coming out of Egypt, (Jeremiah 7:22, 23; Exodus 12:13; Exodus 13:9). The Holy Days do not stand with sacrifices or burnt offerings.

In the New Testament we find that Christ and the apostles kept the Holy days (Luke 2:41; Acts 12:3; John 7:1-2; Acts 12:1; Acts 20:16; 1 Corinthians 5:6-8; Acts 27:9; Acts 18:21; 1 Corinthians 16:8). Tabernacles is symbolic or "likened" to the human body (2 Peter 1:14; 2 Corinthians 5:1).

Review:

1. *The Sabbath was established by God, reaffirmed by Jesus and taught by the apostles.*
2. *The Passover represents Christ's sacrifice for all, both the individual and the world.*
3. *The Feast of Unleavened Bread is symbolical of the continual removing of sin from a persons life.*
4. *The New Testament Church of God began on the Day of Pentecost.*
5. *The Feast of Trumpets portrays a time of war and the intervention of Jesus Christ.*
6. *The Day of Trumpets symbolizes the Resurrection of all who died in Christ and the change of all who will be living in Christ.*
7. *The basic idea of Atonement is a covering of sin, and the purpose is to accomplish reconciliation between man and God.*
8. *During the millennium all people will keep the Feast of Tabernacles.*
9. *Christ and the apostles kept the Holy Days of God.*

The Difference it makes

The Sanctification by God of every seventh day after creation, and resting upon it, was for the benefit of all mankind. It was also God's way of establishing a weekly cycle of rest on the seventh day for all mankind. It was obviously intended to be a permanent human institution (Mark 2: 27). Notice, that this institution was not established just for Israel or the Jews, but for all mankind.

This "seventh day rest" institution is not controlled by the heavenly bodies which mark days, months, seasons and years, but by the physical and spiritual need of all men

for a weekly day of rest, worship, and thankfulness for God's great gift of Creation and life. In addition, we also come to understand and to know to a greater degree the true Creator God.

The Sabbath Day of rest preceded the covenant God made with Israel and will continue forever (Isaiah 66:23). We must understand that while Israel of old may have lost track of time while in bondage in Egypt, God re-established the correct weekly cycle and His annual Holy Days when He brought Israel out of Egypt (Exodus 12:1-3). Any events that could possibly have caused a discrepancy in the weekly cycle since creation, for example, "Joshua's long day" and Hezekiah's request that the shadow return backwards ten degrees, would have been corrected by God if it needed to be (Joshua 10:8 and 12, 13 and 2 Kings 20:9-11). No mention of any necessary time correction was made by our Savior Jesus Christ. He accepted the calendar dates for the Holy Days as kept by the Jews as accurate never questioning their method of calculation. Therefore, we can rest assured, that the seventh day Sabbath, (sanctified by God) - which always falls on a Saturday according to our modern day calendar - is correct, along with all the rest of God's Holy Feast Days (Leviticus 23: 1-4).

Jesus made the statement that He would build His Church (Matthew 16:18). Jesus preached the New Testament gospel that the Church was to continue to proclaim (Matthew 28: 19-20).

Jesus during His earthly ministry never observed any of the "traditions of the elders"; however, it will be found that Jesus did keep all of His Father's annual Holy Days (John 7:2, 10, 14, 37). By doing so He set mankind the example that they should follow in His footsteps. The apostle John was inspired to write, "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also to walk, even as He walked" (1 John 2:6).

Because of the profound example set by Jesus Himself, it is irresponsible for professing Christians today to carelessly say that it makes no

difference to God what days are observed, and sanctified. God, has never allowed people to worship Him "the way they want to". God informs us how we will worship Him!

When Jesus was speaking to the Samaritan woman He informed her, "an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:23). "God is Spirit" means He is not a physical being with limitations. He is present everywhere, and He can be worshiped anywhere, at any time. Our worship must be genuine and true. We must remember, Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). The Holy Spirit will help us in our worship of the Father. The Holy Spirit will pray for us (Romans 8:26), teaching us the words of Christ (John 14:26), revealing to us that we are loved (Romans 5:5). When Jesus said, "Salvation is from the Jews," He meant that only through the Jewish Messiah, would the whole world find salvation.

At a particular time in the future every individual will have to stand before the Judgement seat of the Great God and give an answer for why they failed to honor God and worship Him on His Holy Days as He specified, and instead chose to observe days not found in the Scriptures (that were not commanded or sanctified by God). The day will come when the books of the Bible will be opened and the dead will be judged by those things written in the books (Revelation 20:12). It is quite apparent, everyone will be judged by what God says, not by what individuals think, and that makes a great difference!

Review:

1. *God's seventh day Sabbath is for all mankind.*
2. *The seventh day rest institution is not controlled by the sun, moon or stars.*
3. *God re-established the correct weekly cycle when He brought Israel out of Egypt.*

4. *Jesus never observed any of the "traditions of the elders."*

5. *We must worship God in Spirit and in Truth.*

Biblical Confirmation

Because God created us and thoroughly understands our human nature He is aware of our proclivity to forget. When He gave Moses the commandments He wrote, "*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy*" (Exodus 20:8). This certainly suggests that we need to be reminded continually of important events. All of God's Holy Days are designed to keep us in *remembrance* and also to reveal to us future events as we come to understand them better (Jude 5).

In 1 Corinthians 5:7 the apostle Paul gives to New Testament Christians who are predominantly of Gentile origin a command. "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump..." Why? Why put out leaven, the type of sin?

The Corinthian problem here was one of pride, bragging, and glorying about a particular sinful situation they were allowing to exist in their midst. Namely a problem of incest, which Paul calls *porneia* ("sexual immorality"). Paul rebuked them for their arrogance in the matter. He reminded them, "For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." Christ has paid the penalty for sin (death) and conquered sin in the flesh. Therefore, we should not allow sin to overcome us. We must keep sin out of our lives. The purity Paul describes is symbolized in the removal of leaven in the celebration of the Old Testament Passover, which is fulfilled in Christ, "Our Passover Lamb" (1 Corinthians 5: 8).

"Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven" - put away leaven out of your houses each feast - not only the physical leaven (and leavening agents), but also "the leaven of malice and wickedness" and keep the feast "with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

If God's Holy days were not to be observed by gentile Christians, why would Paul painstakingly explain and

give New Testament instructions about Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Why not explain lent and easter?

In 1 Corinthians 11: 18-34, we find Paul explaining in detail how to keep the Passover (Lord's Supper, Communion) to the local congregation. Later Paul wrote to these same Gentile converts, "For I will not see you now by the way; but I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit. But I will tarry at Ephesus until *Pentecost* (1 Corinthians 16: 7-8). In the predominantly Gentile city of Ephesus, Paul is not teaching about Whitsunday, but about Pentecost, another of God's Holy Days. This was the day on which the New Testament Church began, the one Jesus said He would build.

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place" (Acts 2: 1). This is not some pagan feast day, but one of God's annual feast days that He sanctified.

Now notice, Acts 20: 6. "And we sailed away from Philippi after the *days of Unleavened Bread* and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days." Luke and the others with him did not sail away after keeping a pagan holiday such as Easter. No, they obediently kept the days of Unleavened Bread. It is clear, God's sanctified days, the weekly Sabbath and the annual Holy Days were kept and taught by the early apostles.

Review:

1. *God's Holy Days are designed to keep us in remembrance and also to reveal to us future events as we come to understand them better.*
2. *Paul taught the gentile Corinthians about the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread.*
3. *The Sabbath and annual Holy Days were kept and taught by the early apostles.*

The Mixture

Why did the Lord God choose Israel out of all the nations of the earth?

Perhaps the clearest statement of the election of the children of Israel

as God's chosen people will be found in (Deuteronomy 7: 6-9).

From these verses we find God chose them to keep His oath which He had sworn to their fathers. Also He set His love upon them and considered them to be a holy people even though they were the fewest in number of all people. In addition to all this, He redeemed them out of the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

The Lord God revealed to them His Sabbath as a sign so they would never forget that He is the Creator. He also gave Israel annual Holy Days, *memorials*, to commemorate Israel's deliverance from Egypt, a picture for His Church of the plan of God in delivering the world from sin. But Israel did not remain faithful to these God-given festivals, rather they chose pagan days.

Many today believe because pagan customs and rites have been "Christianized" that God will accept them as proper worship when "applied to Christ", even though there is no scriptural proof for such reasoning. This reasoning is completely contrary to the written word of God, and we will see just how contrary it turned out to be in those days when the Israelites set up the "Golden Calf" (Exodus 32).

Obviously such worship - as we find in this chapter - was false, heathenistic, and an abomination to the Lord. These Israelites wanted a god they could see, an image to supplement their worship of the invisible Eternal God. So they set up the golden calf, a symbol of the son of the "sun-god." "So the next day they rose early and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

They made themselves naked and practiced rites they had learned in the pagan land of Egypt, which in turn had received its paganism from Babylon.

These Israelites claimed they were having a "feast to the Lord" the true God (Exodus 32:5). God's rebuke was severe and swift. Three thousand

fell by the sword as a result of their apostasy (Exodus 32: 27-28). If God would not accept this kind of worship from the children of Israel, why should it be expected that He would accept a "mixture" of worship today between paganism and Christianity?

During the forty years of wandering in the wilderness, the children of Israel carried the tabernacle of God. While there were many obedient worshipers of the true God, there were also those who were not content with this, so they added a Babylonian tabernacle that they carried with them also. As God pointed out to them, "Did you present Me with sacrifices and grain offerings in the wilderness for forty years, O house of Israel? You also carried along Sikkuth your king and Kiyun, your images, the star of your gods which you made for yourselves. Therefore, I will make you go into exile beyond Damascus, says the Lord, whose name is the God of Hosts" (Amos 5:26-27).

This same apostasy is mentioned by the first martyr, Steven, when he witnessed to the Council. "You also took along the Tabernacle of Moloch and the Star of the God Rompha, the images which you made to worship them. I also will remove you beyond Babylon" (Acts 7: 43).

After listening to all Steven had to say (as recorded in Acts seven), "they cried out with a loud voice, and covered their ears, and they rushed upon him with one impulse. And when they had driven him out of the city, they began stoning him" (Acts 7:58).

These idol gods they carried are but different names of BAAL (Nimrod) and ASTARTE (the Mother-Goddess). Because of this mixture, God rejected their songs of worship, sacrifices, and offerings.

The Second book of Kings gives us another example of paganism being mixed with the worship of the true God. We read that the children of Israel fell into false worship. They instituted secret rites, built high places, worshiped the sun, moon, and stars, used divination and enchantments, caused

their children to pass through the fire, etc. (2 Kings 9-17). As a result they were driven from their own land.

Every nation made gods of their own, and these gods are listed in (2 Kings 17: 29-31). They attempted to worship these gods and the Lord God also, with a mixture. So, in this way, "They feared the Lord and appointed from among themselves priests of the high places, who acted for them in the houses of the high places" (2 Kings 17: 33). They claimed to worship the Lord, but they served idols also. Today, likewise, Romanism claims to worship the Lord, but it is obviously a system that is a mixture of idol worship.

Another example of a mixture of paganism inserted into the worship of the Lord is found in the Book of Ezekiel. In the very entrance of God's temple, the people erected an idol. Even the priests were offering incense to false gods. In this case, these abominations were pictures upon the walls, pictures of creeping things, beasts, idols, etc. This was plainly Babylonish, for such pictures are also found on the Ishtar Gate in Babylon. Also connected with the house of God were "women weeping for Tammuz" the false Babylonish sun-god! There were men standing with their backs toward the temple of the Lord, and their faces toward the east, and they worshiped the sun toward the east. Sounds very much like the "Easter morning sunrise services" celebrated today.

The house of Judah was worshiping the true God with a mixture (verse 17). God did not accept their worship but said He would deal with them in wrath (Ezekiel 8:17-18). God does not bless a mixture.

Again we read of another time of apostasy in Ezekiel 23 when the people that had known God, caused their sons to pass for them through the fire and practiced other pagan rites. Concerning this, our Lord said, "Again, they have done this to Me: they have defiled My sanctuary on the same day and have profaned My Sabbaths. For when they had slaughtered their children for their idols, they entered My sanctuary on the same day to profane it;

and lo, thus they did within My house" (Ezekiel 23:38-39).

Samuel spoke to the children of Israel when they attempted to worship God and also retain the same old paganistic ways. "If you do return unto the Lord with all your heart, remove the foreign gods and the Ashtaroath (*pagan Mother worship*) from among you and direct your hearts to the Lord and serve Him alone, He will deliver you from the hands of the Philistines" (1 Samuel 7:3).

However, Israel continued to serve Ashtaroath and the Baals.

These Canaanite deities mentioned seduced Israel for hundreds of years until she finally went into her two exiles. The Book of Judges mentions at least four deities of a fairly extensive pantheon: Baal (Judges 2:13), Dagon (16:23), Asherah (3:7) and Ashtar (2:13). The Canaanite culture was by far the most degrading and corrupt in the entire area. God's judgment upon the Canaanites was such that there was nothing to redeem.

By a multitude of examples we see from the scriptures that God will not allow us to worship Him "as we would choose".

Review:

1. *The commemoration of months and years was never commanded by God for His people.*
2. *God chose Israel to keep His oath which He had sworn to their Fathers.*
3. *When God brought Israel out of Egypt some of the people were practicing pagan rites they had learned in Egypt.*
4. *God is not pleased with the mixing of pagan rites with His festivals.*
5. *Some of the children of Israel carried a Babylonian tabernacle.*
6. *The "idol gods" they carried represented Baal (Nimrod) and Astarte (the Mother Goddess), known by many names.*
7. *Because of this mixture, God rejected their songs of worship, sacrifice, and offerings.*

8. *God will not allow us to worship Him as we choose.*

The Colossians Example

The Gentile converts of Colossi were observing the annual Sabbaths, following the calendar of God, and resting each weekly Sabbath. This usually surprises the many, but it is true. The scripture used the most against God's Holy Days is in fact the strongest proof that the Colossians were keeping these days.

The Colossians, just like the Thessalonians, became followers of God's people in Jerusalem which are in Christ Jesus (Thessalonians 2:14). All of the scattered churches of God in the Gentile world followed the lead of God's church in Jerusalem.

Paul gave a glowing commendation to the converts at Colossi (Colossians 2:5). The Colossians church was raised up by one of Paul's evangelists and Paul had received a report of their faithfulness in following Christ, doing the things He did and keeping the days He kept. They had given up their pagan customs and practices (Colossians 1:21-23).

Can we really imagine the pressure they must have been under from their neighbors wanting them to give up their new found faith. These Gentile converts (Colossians 1:27), had been called out of the world, called to separate from the traditions of the world, but they still lived in a world steeped with pagan superstition and custom.

Their neighbors did not like them taking up with these strange Biblical customs so contrary to their own pagan customs and practices. They did not want any "Jewish practices" developing in their community! They wanted everybody to continue with the traditions and doctrines of the pagan philosophers, whom the world respected. They weren't about to have their pagan holidays replaced by God's holy days, or their sunworship rites superseded by the weekly Sabbath, or the pagan Roman calendar replaced by the Biblical method of recording days, months, and years.

Review:

1. *The Gentile converts of Colossi were observing God's annual Sabbaths.*
2. *Their neighbors did not like them keeping what they considered to be strange customs and practices contrary to their own.*

Colossians Asceticism

Colossi was an exceedingly ascetic community. They avoided enjoying pleasurable things. They believed in a religion of severity. They felt that denying the desires of the flesh and rigidly suppressing the body they could reach a high spiritual or intellectual state. They fasted, often punished themselves, were vegetarians in part, refused to eat those clean meats God created for us, and abstained from drinking wine.

In an attempt to keep people "in line" they brought social pressure, by instituting local "blue laws" to keep the preaching of the gospel from spreading. (See The Church in the Roman Empire Before A.D. 170, by W.M. Ramsay, Chapter X.) These pagan beliefs were commonly known to the heathen by the name "*philosophy*." Paul used this very word. "Beware lest any man spoil you through *philosophy* and vain deceit, after the traditions of *men*, after the *rudiments* (or basic concepts) of the world, and not after Christ (Colossians 2: 8). This pagan philosophy was the doctrine that you could pay for your own sins by denying yourself the pleasurable appetites of the body. Obviously this pagan philosophy denied the need for a Savior. Philosophers such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle taught that the soul was immortal, and that the body was a prison house for it.

The only way the soul could be freed from the prison house of the flesh was for the soul to be purified from all enjoyable desires of the flesh.

The early Catholic writers used this same expression in their day to mean "*asceticism*". "It was very common... to call an ascetic mode of life *philosophical*, or the life of a philosopher.

Contemporary philosophy emphasized strongly the dualism of spirit and matter, and the necessity of subduing the matter by the spirit! "The Neo-platonic philosophy of the times, through its doctrine of the purification of the soul by its liberation from the body or sensuous things, taught celibacy and ascetic practices generally." (From pp. 252 and 546 of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, second series edited by Schaff and Wace.)

They were stern ascetics who followed this philosophy. They were the opposite of many other Gentiles who loved pleasure and indulged in the sins of the flesh, their motto being "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."

The Grecian Gentiles at Colossi were another matter. They judged severely their Christian neighbors for the least infraction of ascetic behavior. They did not like to see the Christians freely eating meat good for food, or drinking moderately. They especially despised their keeping of the Sabbath and the annual festivals. That is why Paul wrote: "Let no *man* therefore *judge* you in meat or drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days" (Colossians 2:16).

So we find our Gentile converts judged by relatives and neighbors, for doing the things Jesus did. These Gentiles were being judged for their part in the celebration of festivals commanded to be observed forever. They were being judged for keeping holy the days God made holy! And yet this verse has been twisted cleverly by many in an attempt to make it say the exact opposite of what it does say.

Review:

1. *To be an ascetic is to deny yourself the things God said are good and pleasurable.*
2. *The ascetic community refused to eat those clean meats God created for all.*
3. *Many in the Colossian community believed they could save themselves by denying themselves the pleasurable appetites of the body.*

4. Paul said we were not to let any man judge us in meat, drink, or in respect of an Holy Day of God's, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days.

Not Judaizing Legalism

In the Book of Colossians Paul is dealing with a heresy which seemed to be developing in the church at Colossi and possibly spreading to other churches. This heresy Paul was concerned with tended to compromise with the pagan pantheistic evolutionism of the Greek philosophers.

Many have thought that Paul was writing about the law of Moses in Colossians, that the newly converted Gentiles there were being led into "Judaism." However, there is not one indication that there were any Jews attempting to lead Christians into Judaism.

Paul does speak of Judaism in Galatians and Romans, but not here in the book of Colossians. What is being revealed to us by Paul is that the converted Gentiles were being judged by their heathen neighbors for *keeping the days God made Holy!*

Notice Colossians 2 verse 8 again. "Beware lest any man spoil you through *philosophy and vain deceit*" Notice, it does not speak of Judiazers or the Law of Moses, but it speaks of pagans who adhered to "*philosophy and vain deceit.*" How? "After the rudiments (fundamental beliefs) of the world and not after Christ." It is the evil practices of the world that the apostle Paul is condemning. It is a pagan Gentile world. It was a pagan Roman world, filled with foolish and vain traditions of men. The Jews always thought of themselves as superior to the sinful world and racially separate from the world. It is Gentile worldly traditions then that Paul warns to beware of.

Continuing on beginning with verse 9. "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." God dwelt in Christ, not in the worldly philosophers. "And ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power." Through Christ we are made perfect, not through

asceticism and human traditions. Christ is head over all. He is the One we must look to, not to the traditions and vain deceit of worldly philosophers.

"And you 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 of the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" (Colossians 2:10-11). Paul elsewhere reveals we are to be circumcised "in the heart" (Romans 2:29). Sin, was conquered in the flesh by Christ, therefore we must surrender ourselves to Christ, He will then, enter into us through the power of His Holy Spirit and begin a clean up campaign, so to speak, conquering our sins, and circumcising our hearts and minds spiritually. Physical circumcision involves the cutting away of only a small portion of our flesh, but Christ circumcises our whole body which is full of sin. Christ is the Great Enabler. He enables us to cut away sin out of our lives, enables us to bury our past sins in the watery grave of baptism. "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" (Colossians 2:12). We must put our faith, "which is really the Faith of Christ", in God's enablement and ability to supply us with the Holy Spirit and raise us from a dead past to new life just as He "hath raised Him (Christ) from the dead."

Review:

1. Paul reveals to us that the converted Gentiles were being judged by their heathen neighbors for *keeping the days God made Holy!*
2. Beware, lest any man spoil you through the *philosophy of the world and vain deceit.*
3. Paul is speaking out against the *rudiments of the world, (the fundamental beliefs) of the world, and not after Christ.*
4. God dwelt in Christ, not in the *worldly philosophers.*
5. We are complete in Him, which is the *head of all principality and power.*

Sin Blotted Out

Notice carefully what it is that Paul is revealing here. "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses" (Colossians 2:13). These people before their conversion, were uncircumcised Gentiles. Now, the Father has quickened them together with Him (Christ), having forgiven you all *trespasses.*

God forgives sin! These Gentile converts were guilty of sinning. They, prior to conversion, were observing and following the paganistic heathenish practices of the world around them. They were attempting to pay for their own guilty consciences by penance, and by asceticism. However, their guilty past continued to follow and plague them. No matter what they gave up or denied themselves, their consciences still condemned them. They still weren't forgiven.

Things now were very different! They had really and truly been forgiven. No longer were they bound to their past sins. No longer did their guilty past follow them, dogging them every step of the way. They no longer had the guilt of following *human customs, human ordinances, or human decrees and vanity.* Their sins had been *Blotted out.* Jesus Christ had taken them away. Every converted person truly understands what a relief it is to have their sins *blotted out* forever, never to reappear in the judgment. "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" (Colossians 2:14). All this was accomplished by Christ who "bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24).

Review:

1. These people before their conversion, were *uncircumcised Gentiles.*
2. These Colossians before their conversion were following the *paganistic practices of the world.*
3. They were trying to pay for their own guilty past through *penance and asceticism.*

4. Now in Christ, their past sins were blotted out.

Nailed to the Stake

The question we must ask now is, just what was nailed to the cross (stake)?

Clearly it was Christ who was nailed to the cross (stake). It is He who bore our sins. When He shed His blood from the cross in our stead, He by doing so blotted out all our sins by paying for them in full with His own life. It is sin which was blotted out. "That your *sins* may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19). "Have mercy upon me," David cried, "*blot* out my *transgressions*.... Hide thy face from my *sins*, and *blot out* all my *iniquities*" (Psalm 51:1, 9).

Notice this serious statement "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10). Does the blood of Christ cover all of our bad deeds? Have the sins that stood against us been *blotted out*?

Turn now to Revelation 20:12, and see what happens in the final judgment. "And I saw the dead, small and great stand before God; and the books were opened.... and the dead were judged out of those things which were *written in the books, according to their works*."

This verse strongly suggests that a record exists containing all the sins that are against us. We will be judged accordingly, *unless* Christ's blood covers them, *blots* them out. Christ died to blot out the written record of our guilty past. The record of our past sins has figuratively been nailed to the cross, taken out of the way, and thoroughly expunged.

It is quite clear that the purpose of Colossians 2:14 is to show the reality of this blotting out of these *ordinances* that were against us and contrary to us. *SIN* was blotted out, not God's Law, not His "Commandments."

Review:

1. It was Jesus who was nailed to the stake.

2. Jesus blotted out our sins by paying for them in full with His own life.

3. It is our sin that was blotted out.

4. The dead were judged out of those things that were written in the books, according to their works.

5. A record must exist containing all of the sins that are against us.

6. We will be judged accordingly, unless Christ's blood covers our sins and blots them out.

7. It was not God's law that was blotted out, but our sins.

Pagan Ordinances

What were these *ordinances* that were spoken of? The answer will be found in the book of Colossians chapter 2, verses 20 thru 23. "Wherefore if ye"- the Gentile converts, "be dead with Christ from the rudiments (fundamental principles or ideas) of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances" (verse 20). *Ordinances!* Notice it. But which ordinances? See the answer in the next verse: "(Touch not; taste not; handle not; which are all to perish with the using;) *After The Commandments And Doctrines Of Men?*"

Now that's plain! They were human traditions! Sinful Customs! Continuing: "Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship." Pagan asceticism, "and humility, and neglecting of the body" - appearing outwardly humble and self-denying, but inwardly self-righteous - "not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh," - "but are of no value against indulgence of the flesh."

Therefore, these evil practices are pagan ordinances, or customs of men, based on the commandments and doctrines of pagan speculative philosophy.

These pagan customs and ordinances of the heathen were forbidding people from touching, tasting, and handling those things that God gave to us to be enjoyed.

These heathen Gentiles of Colossi did not want other Gentiles to enjoy the freedom that is in Christ. They

wanted to establish their own righteousness: don't drink this, don't eat that, don't touch something else. This was their pagan religion of "don't's!"

Clearly the original inspired Greek for "handwriting of ordinances" is not even referring to Moses' laws!

In the original Greek it reads *cheirographon Lois dogmasin*. It does not mean a code of laws. The Greek word for "handwriting" originally referred to "a note of hand, or writing in which one acknowledges that money has either been deposited with him or lent to him by another, to be returned at an appointed time." (From Thayer's Lexicon.) Later it came to refer to any acknowledgment of debt. There is a debt we must pay, unless we repent. That debt is the death penalty we have all earned because of our sin (Romans 6:23). We must pay this death penalty, or have Christ pay it for us. That is the meaning of the word "handwriting" here- an acknowledgment of debt. But how was it originally incurred? What did the Colossians do that brought on that debt of sin? The answer is in Colossians 2:13. What was blotted out were *trespasses* incurred through following *sinful ordinances*, believing lying dogmas or decrees, like the immortality of the soul which was promoted by philosophers and was at the very root of pagan asceticism! You find nothing being said against any "law of Moses." Therefore, the written record of *sins* which were blotted out were the evil practices of pagan ordinances for which Christ paid the penalty and God forgave us.

Review:

1. These evil practices are pagan ordinances, or customs of men, based on the commandments and doctrines of pagan speculative philosophy.

2. The original inspired Greek for "handwriting of ordinances" is not even referring to Moses' law.

3. The debt we must pay is the death penalty we have all earned because of sinning.

4. The written record of sins which were blotted out were the evil practices of

pagan ordinances for which Christ paid the penalty and God forgave us.

5. *Not one word is being said against any "law of Moses."*

Common Assumption

We have found that the true meaning of the expression "handwriting of ordinances" according to the Bible is "acknowledgment of guilt through (following human) dogmas." The question we must now ask is, what about the "law of commandments in ordinances" mentioned in Ephesians 2:15?

We must not jump to the conclusion that it is speaking of the Law of God or the "ceremonial" law of Moses, because it is neither!

Again, let us read in Ephesians, beginning with verses 11-12 of chapter 2: "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh?" Special attention must be paid to the fact that these verses are not speaking of Jews, but of Gentiles, "who are called Uncircumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world."

Through the blood of Christ, the Gentile who was far off, and the Jew who was near were reconciled to God (Ephesians 2:13). Verse 16 explains, "And that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh." So now we have access to God by the Holy Spirit and whether Jew or Gentile are part of the one body, The body of Christ.

Therefore, God reconciled us to Himself through the sacrifice of Christ! Christ condemned sin in the flesh and paid for our sins with His life, conquering the carnal mind. "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:7). It was because of this enmity, the hatred and ill will of the natural mind in every human being that made it necessary for Christ

to die. This natural enmity that stood between God and man is what separated us from God. "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2). Clearly, this is the meaning of Ephesians 2:14, "and hath broken down the middle wall of partition." Notice that the words "between us" have been added and are in italics. Because there was a physical wall in the temple which separated the Jews who were "near" to God from the Gentiles who were "far off" this fact has been used in an attempt to explain reconciliation of Jew and Gentile. It is obvious that removing a physical wall between Jew and Gentile will not reconcile them to God, but rather it is the relationship between them and God that is important. The only wall referred to in Scripture that separates man from God is sinful Idolatry. "In their setting of their threshold by my thresholds, and their post by my posts and *the wall between me and them*" (Ezekiel 43:8). In this scripture God is giving us an example of idolatrous practices of pre-exilic Israel, the building of pagan worship sites in Jerusalem. It is that natural wall of sin and natural enmity in human hearts and in society that has been broken down by, and paid for by, the sacrificing of Christ's life for ours, "having abolished in His flesh the Enmity," having paid for sin and making possible the receipt of the Holy Spirit to conquer the carnality of man, the carnal resistance of society with its ways.

Jesus revealed this marvelous truth. "I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Through the power of the Spirit in our lives, we, too, can overcome the world, its customs, its false teachings, its heathen dogmas masquerading in the name of Christ, the dictates of society! That is what Christ abolished. "Having abolished in His flesh the Enmity, even the law of commandments in ordinances" (Ephesians 2:15).

The enmity against God is expressed by commands in the form of "ordinances", dogmas, in the Greek, the very commandments of men, human

tradition, heathen customs, the dictates of society, which Paul condemned in Colossians.

This is what Christ abolished through His sacrifice. The Ephesian Gentiles did not know the law of God, they never practiced the law of Moses. It was their notorious sins which separated them from God.

Now however, they were reconciled to God, forgiven of their sins of the past. They also had the Spirit of God, and the ability to overcome the world around them, with its customs, false teachings, and heathen dogmas which camouflage themselves in the name of Christ.

There is not one word here about the law of Moses or the Ten commandments being annulled. It certainly does make a difference to God whether we obey Him or not and which days we venerate.

Review:

1. *The "handwriting of ordinances" according to the Bible is "acknowledgment of guilt through (following human) dogmas."*
2. *The "law of commandments in ordinances" is not speaking of the Law of God or the "ceremonial" law of Moses.*
3. *It was the hatred and ill will in every human being that made the death of Christ necessary.*
4. *The wall that separates man from God is sinful Idolatry.*
5. *It is that natural wall of sin and natural enmity in human hearts and in society that has been broken down by, and paid for by, the sacrificing of Christ's life for ours.*
6. *The Ephesian Gentiles did not know the law of God, they never practiced the law of Moses.*
7. *There is not one word here about the law of Moses or the Ten Commandments being annulled.*
8. *It is very important to God which days we venerate.*

The Obedient Colossians

It is unlikely the Colossians would be obeying the gospel and doing the things Christ did without this knowledge having been preached to them. This preaching knitted them together in love (Colossians 2:2). Love is the fulfillment of the law (Romans 13:10). They were obedient to God's law. But just like other Gentiles, they knew nothing of this law until it was preached to them. (See Romans 2:12,13). At the first they did not know the way of love, but now they not only knew it, they were practicing it.

They learned they could not conquer the flesh by practicing ascetics. Now they were overcoming themselves through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is given to those who truly want to obey Jesus Christ (Acts 5:32).

When these Colossian Christians began obeying God, their neighbors were made to feel self condemnation and inferior. Now their neighbors began sitting in judgment of them, condemning them for following the ways of Christ which they had newly accepted as their savior. And what were these newly converted being judged for? Notice! It was not for keeping pagan days such as Christmas, Easter, and Sunday holidays, not for abstinence from certain foods and alcohol! Not at all! But, notice it:

"Let no man therefore judge you in eating and drinking, or in connection with the observance of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbaths." The Colossians were no longer ascetics. They were being judged for observing God's festivals, His calendar measured by the new moon, and the Sabbath! These Colossians, had never kept God's Holy Days before, but now, since they had heard the gospel were keeping the days made Holy by God. Therefore, Paul was warning them not to return to or be influenced by their old pagan ways, the ways their relatives and acquaintances were following still, and by persecution were attempting to ensnare them again.

Many have believed for a great length of time that these verses in Colossians were speaking of the law of Moses and rituals and sacrifices, and of course they are not. Nothing here speaks of ceremonial law, animal sacrifices or drink offerings. In the original Greek *en broosei and en posei* means "in eating and in drinking." What it does not mean is meat and drink offerings. Even so, they continue to assume it means sacrificial rituals.

What it is really speaking of is the Christian liberty to enjoy the abundant life Jesus came to give us. Jesus came eating and drinking (Matthew 11:19 and Luke 7:34). He set the example. He certainly was not an ascetic! The Colossian Christians Paul is speaking of are following Christ, so therefore, they are no longer ascetics either. On a daily basis they were enjoying the Christian life, walking in the footsteps of Christ, with temperance and self control in connection with each feast, every new moon and the weekly Sabbaths.

Review:

1. *Without the Gospel being preached to the Colossians they would not be knitted together in Love.*
2. *Love is the fulfillment of the law.*
3. *They learned they could not conquer the flesh by practicing ascetics.*
4. *God gives His Spirit to those who obey Jesus Christ.*
5. *We are freed by Jesus Christ to enjoy an abundant life.*
6. *The Colossians were no longer ascetics.*

What do these Days Foreshadow

Lets take a look at Colossians 2:17. "Which are a shadow of things to come..." This could be translated, "which foreshadow things to come." Do these Holy Days of God foreshadow things to come? Yes! Is the weekly Sabbath a foreshadow of good things to come? Most certainly! It is a memorial of creation and it also foreshadows the seventh 1000-years when all mankind will have an opportunity to rest from labors of sin. Paul explains in Hebrews 4:4, how that day foreshadows God's

thousand year millennial rest. Does the weekly Sabbath suddenly evaporate? Certainly not! "There remaineth therefore the keeping of a Sabbath to the people of God" (Hebrews 4:9). Keeping the fourth commandment is certainly a test of obedience. If we do not make God's Sabbath a delight and keep it now, how can we expect to enter into an eternal rest? The Colossians believed the same way and they were observing the weekly Sabbaths.

In the same way the annual festivals, instituted as memorials, also foreshadow the plan of God. The Weekly Sabbath and the Holy Days are *rehearsals* to keep us in the knowledge of the plan of God.

Actually, only one festival has been entirely fulfilled in type, and that is the Passover. Yet Jesus commanded us to celebrate it again as a memorial. "This do in remembrance of Me" (1 Corinthians 11:24).

The claim of some is that Colossians 2:16 refers "to annual feasts, new moons, and annual Sabbaths," not to the weekly Sabbaths.

However, this is a grave mistake. Whenever the expression "Sabbath days" is used with "holy days" and new moons," the WEEKLY Sabbaths, are always meant! There is no exception to this rule. Read 1 Chronicles 23:31; 2 Chronicles 2:4; 31:3; Ezra 3:5, Nehemiah 10:33.

All annual holy days are annual Sabbaths! Clearly, in all these verses the weekly Sabbaths are referred to in the plural just as in Colossians 2:16! Colossians 2:16 includes both weekly and annual Sabbaths! Therefore, if it abolishes one, it abolishes the other. However, as it establishes one, so it establishes the other as New Testament teaching to be followed.

Review:

1. *God's Holy Days foreshadow things to come.*
2. *The weekly Sabbath is a memorial of creation, and it foreshadows good things to come.*

3. *The weekly Sabbath and the Holy Days are rehearsals to keep us in the knowledge of the plan of God.*

4. *All annual holy days are annual Sabbaths.*

A Worrisome Verse

In Colossians 2:17, the last six words have been a problem for many. First of all we must realize that the word "is" in the King James Version is in italics, which means it was not in the original Greek. It should read, "but the body of Christ." Just what is this body of Christ and how does Paul use this expression in Colossians?

In the first chapter of Colossians the eighteenth verse we find that Christ "is the Head of the body, the church." And in Colossians 2:19: "And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands {has} nourishment ministered..."

Surely, everyone understands that the true Church of God is the body of Christ. That being so, it is easy to comprehend that as the Spirit of God once dwelled in the earthly body of Jesus Christ, so now the Holy Spirit dwells in each member of the Church and together the believers constitute one body, by which they perform the very work Christ did. Therefore, those who believe and obey Christ make up the very body of Christ today. And Christ is the head of the church as the Husband is the head of the wife (Ephesians 5:23). Paul is making it clear that believers are not to let any man sit in judgment of their Christian conduct, (Colossians 2:16-17). Man does not determine how believers should live. It is the responsibility of the Church, the body of Christ, to teach how to observe festivals and to explain the meaning and matters of self control among other things. It is also the Church's responsibility to determine what the proper conduct of the followers of Christ should be. Therefore, these verses, so little understood as they are should be translated clearly: "Let no man therefore judge you...but (rather) let the body of Christ (determine it)." It is recognized by Greek scholars that the first expression "let no man" demands that

there be a subsequent expression which tells who is to do the judging of the matter!

With this plain understanding it is quite clear that the Colossians were keeping holy, the sanctified days God made holy!

Review:

1. *Christ is the Head of the body, the church.*
2. *Those who believe and obey Christ make up the very body of Christ today.*
3. *Christ is the head of the church as the husband is the head of the wife.*
4. *Man does not determine how believers should live.*
5. *Let no man judge you, but rather let the body of Christ determine it.*
6. *The Colossians were keeping holy the sanctified days God made holy!*

Judging others

"One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord: and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks: and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks" (Romans 14:5-6). Often times we overlook the obvious. In these two verses just quoted there is not one mention of what day God regards or does not regard. Neither does it mention anything about what God eats or does not eat. Yet, it is the many who have twisted these verses making them say what Paul never intended them to say.

No where does Paul say or encourage the observance of Easter, Lent, Sunday, or Christmas. Nor does Paul say God esteemeth one day above another, or every day alike, and most certainly he did not say that Jesus did away with the very days He observed all of His life. What Paul is pointing out is what men establish, esteemeth, and show regard for. These verses are not telling us what God said, but what Men thought about days and eating. We are not going to be judged by what Men do

or think, but by the word of God, (John 12:48). We will not be judged by the beliefs of men, but by the Words Jesus spoke.

These Saints in Rome had differing opinions about many things and were judging one another quite harshly, even as being unworthy of Christ. "Who are you that judges another man's servant? to his own master he stands or falls. Yes, he shall be helped up: for God is able to make him stand" (Romans 14:4). It is not a matter of sanctioning or condemning days or foodstuffs, Paul is simply warning the Saints not to judge one another and cause strife for having differing opinions about things they did not yet fully understand. Paul wanted them to understand that the Lord is going to judge everyones deeds. "He that regardeth the day, regardeth it *unto the Lord* and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it."

Paul said, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind," but is Paul suggesting we can believe anything we want? The Proverbs tell us, "Lean not unto thine own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5). Until we know what God says in His word, we can not be fully persuaded in our own minds. It is vital then that we study God's word so we can prove all things and then hold on fast to that which is good (1 Thessalonians 5:21). It would seem that these saints at Rome were having difficulties because they lacked the knowledge necessary to make proper decisions. Paul even said as much, "For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, to the end that you may be established" (Romans 1:11).

These saints were probably new converts without regular local services and guidance, and they were divided in their regarding of certain customs. Paul warned them not to sit in judgment of each other, but to follow peace. God would be the one to judge, but not until after Paul delivered more perfect knowledge to them. Therefore, at this time they were to act in accordance with the best they knew from God's Word, and certainly not from man's word.

This was not intended to give them complete freedom to do as they pleased. They were to obey what God revealed to the best of their ability. Not to obey would be sin, especially since the knowledge of the truth had come. For to him that knows to do good and fails to perform it, it is sin, (James 4:17; John 9:41).

Review:

1. Paul never encourages the observance of Easter, Lent, Sunday, or Christmas.
2. Paul did not say God esteemeth one day above another, or every day alike.
3. Paul did not say that Jesus did away with the very days He observed all His life.
4. Paul is pointing out what men establish, esteemeth, and show regard for.
5. Paul warned them not to sit in judgement of each other.
6. God will do the Judging.
7. Paul promised that he would deliver to them more perfect knowledge.

What Days were These?

Just what were these "Days" the apostle Paul was referring to? Let's carefully read these verses in Romans 14 within their context. Paul is addressing his message to both Jewish and Gentile saints at Rome, admonishing them to receive those who are weak in the faith (Romans 14:1), and they were not to have disputes with them over non-essential matters or to sit in judgment of them.

Some of those who were recently converted were Gentiles, so being weak in the faith caused them to refuse to eat meats and to subsist on mostly vegetables. The explanation for this life style will be found in 1 Corinthians chapter 8 verses 7 and 8. Most of the meat available to them that they could purchase had been offered to idols. The simple fact is, being newly converted they could not eat this meat that had been offered to an idol because it bothered their conscience. In other words, their conscience being weak was defiled because they were eating the

meat with conscience of it having been offered to an idol. While they were converted and had given up idol worship the Holy Spirit had not yet expunged the superstitious beliefs out of their minds as yet, and they were still thinking that the idol was something "real." But why did Paul suddenly depart from his message about eating or not eating meat and mention "days?"

As well as there being converts who would not eat meat, there were also those who were abstaining from particular foods, semi-fasting on particular days and others yet who refused to practice a "semi-fast or abstain from foods, but regarded every day in the same way. "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks" (Romans 14:5-6).

So it would seem, that the whole question surrounded the matter of abstention on particular days. It is not a question of pagan holidays or God's Holy Days, it is simply a question about the days upon which many voluntarily abstained from certain foods.

Jesus said, "Moreover when ye fast" (Matthew 6:16). Jesus expected that we would fast, but He never told us to set aside special days of the week or month for fasting, except for fasting once a year on the Day of Atonement. Notice that Jesus made it clear that our fasting should be done before God, and not to be seen or known of men simply for show. While divided upon fasting, many of the Jews customarily fasted twice a week, on Monday and Thursday (Luke 18:12), but there are no instructions in the Bible for doing so. They also fasted during certain months of the year (Zechariah 7:4-7), but again the Bible gives no such instructions.

The Gentiles also practiced fasting or abstaining from certain foods,

and they also were divided over when and how to perform their own customs.

So it is quite clear that the "Days" Paul was talking about were *not* the Holy Days of God! It does not matter to God when one abstains or fasts. What really matters is the right attitude of heart. Paul was going to Rome to straighten the brethren out on this matter of when and how to abstain, and to give instructions about living in peace with one another.

Review:

1. Paul is addressing both Jewish and Gentile saints at Rome.
2. They were not to judge those weak in the faith, but to accept them and not have disputes with them over non-essential matters.
3. Their conscience made it impossible for them to eat meat once offered to an idol.
4. They were converted but they had not yet overcome superstitious beliefs.
5. They were still thinking that the idol was something "real."
6. The main problem was one of making certain days of the week days to abstain from eating on.
7. Jesus expected we would fast, but He never said to have any special days of the week or month for fasting.
8. The Day of Atonement, comes once a year, and that is the only day the Bible indicated we are to fast on.
9. Our Fasting is to be done before God not before men.
10. Paul was not talking about the Holy Days of God.

Paul's Instructions to Jews and Gentiles

Because Paul never referred to the Sabbath or the Holy Days of God, many have puzzled over just what the apostle was saying to the churches in Galatia when he warned them against observing days, months, times and years, which is altogether something different than God's appointed days.

Notice what Paul did say. "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 you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain (Galatians 4:8-11). Not one word about the Sabbath and God's annual Holy Days. The message Paul gave them was to stop observing "days and months, and times, and year's which is a totally different subject.

It is important to understand that at the beginning of Galatians chapter 4 Paul is addressing the Jews. The Jews were under the law but Christ came to redeem, and to give both to the Jews and Gentiles the adoption of sons.

The Jews had been enslaved to worldly traditions, sinful practices inherited from the Gentiles since the days of Alexander the Great's conquest of Palestine. These worldly traditions, which Paul called "elements of the world" (Galatians 4:3), came to be known as Judaism.

By no stretch of the imagination were these "elements of the world" God's laws, they were however, the "traditions of the elders" the worldly customs adopted by the Jews. "...Ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition" (Mark 7:9).

Paul addresses these Jews as "we" because Paul was also a Jew. He says "we" the Jews were redeemed from death, the penalty of breaking God's spiritual law. The law had a claim over our lives because of our sins, because of following the sinful practices of man (Galatians 4:5).

In Verse 6, Paul is no longer speaking to the Jews. His discourse now addresses the Gentile converts. He does not say "we" but "you." "Howbeit, then, when ye knew not God", remember, the Jews knew God, but the Gentiles had not known God before the preaching of the gospel! Jesus said to the Gentile Samaritan woman: "Ye", the Gentiles, "worship ye know not what: we", the

Jews, "know what we worship for salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22).

Continuing on with Verse 8 of Galatians 4, we see that these converts to whom Paul is now writing *were not Jews!* They were Gentiles by birth. How could these Gentile converts have known God in times past, when they were cut off from Him? "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12). They were slaves to gods which were no gods at all, serving idols and demons instead of the true Living God! Now there were false teachers among them perverting the true gospel that Paul had preached to them. These false teachers were beguiling them to turn *again to their former ways*. Paul was deeply concerned about them and this turn of events. These Gentile converts were leaving the true gospel and returning to their former pagan "Days, and months, and times and years." They could not possibly be returning to God's festivals, because they had never kept them before. They only learned of God's annual Feast Days when Paul preached about them.

Once we understand that Paul was concerned about Gentile converts who were returning to their old ways of worship and not the Jews returning to God's festivals, we can understand what Paul meant when he referred to Days and Months, and Times, and Years. Moses, according to the command of God, orders the Israelites *not to observe* "Times." Observing "times" was a heathen practice connected to the heavenly bodies especially for determining the pagan calendar and the religious seasons of the heathens. The Galatian converts wanted to return to observing penance on the "days" associated with "times", pagan "times" or "seasons", very similar to the christianized religious days of Lent, Easter and the Christmas season celebrated today.

In the fourth century the Catholic Bishop Chrysostom, admitted that these superstitious times which Paul

was forbidding, were *pagan customs* practiced by "Christians" in his day, as in the days of old. He went on to say, "Many were superstitiously addicted to divination...upon them... In the celebration of these times (they) set up lamps in the marketplace, and crown their doors with garlands", as is done at Christmas time today. (From Bingham's's Antiquities of the Christian Church, pp. 1123, 1124).

Not only did the Greeks observe *times*, but they also observed special *days* in honor of the dead. The rites took place on the unlucky days in which they succumbed to complete idleness and cessation of business (From Rest Days p. 79). Even today it is not uncommon for churches to celebrate pagan days in honor of the dead, such as All Souls Day and All Saints' Day (called Halloween by the world). These are the heathen days Paul forbids Christians to observe.

What a shame, that these once converted Galatians were now returning to the custom of doing penance on the old pagan days, days which now masquerade under Christian sounding names.

Jeremiah the prophet makes it clear, that we are not to follow or learn the way of the heathen, (Jeremiah 10:2). Many of these idolatrous days were consecrated to deities of the state religious cults and were unlucky because of the supposed influence of the gods! It is no wonder Paul spoke out against these worldly days. Even today, people are influenced by such beliefs as "unlucky" Friday the thirteenth!

There is no doubt, Paul was writing to the Galatians to impress upon their minds, to give up the foolish and devilish observance of heathen days. Even today, many months of the year are named after so called Greek gods. The observance of months and years were common among the pagans and Paul condemned such pagan customs and practices. Certain months of the year which were considered sacred to the Greek gods, Apollo (April, October), Zeus (February, June), Artemas (April), Bacchus (January) and many others which you can read of in

the Encyclopedia Americana, article "Festival". The world today has adopted the heathen months of the Roman calendar and rejected God's calendar. Paul was forbidding Gentile converts to return to these heathen practices they had once rejected. The commemoration of months was never commanded by God for His people.

Specific years were also set aside, such as the Olympic games, which were celebrated along with national idolatrous feasts. It was these months and years, filled with idolatry and worship ceremonies that Paul was warning the Gentile converts not to return to.

Eight hundred years before the time of Paul the Bible warned through the prophet Hosea that pagan holidays would be substituted for God's Holy Days (Hosea 2:13, 17). The apostle Paul warned about it in Galatians 4:10. It is a sad thing to say, but many people who profess the name of Jesus Christ today are misguided and have rejected God's Holy Days, for the feast days of the Baals. Sunday, Easter, Christmas, and Halloween are the feast days of the Baals. Easter is named after the wife of Baal or Nimrod. God forbids us to inquire about them or to use them in our worship of Him. "...enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? Even so will I do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God: for every abomination to the Lord, which He hateth, have they done unto their gods; even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods" (Deuteronomy 12:30-31).

God chose Israel of old for a special mission which they have not performed. God gave them the Sabbath Day as a special sign so they would never forget that He is the Creator. The annual holy days, memorials, He gave them, to commemorate Israel's deliverance from Egypt, which pictures for the New Testament Church Jesus Christ built, the plan of God in delivering the world from sin.

Instead of remaining faithful to these God given festivals they conceived days of their own. The

prophet Ezekiel devoted several chapters to a condemnation of Israel for breaking the Sabbaths of God (Ezekiel 20:12-26; 22:26).

We must take careful note of the fact, that the reason God punished the House of Israel was for desecrating His Sabbaths. For us modern's to carelessly desecrate God's Holy Days, may not seem very serious, but with the ignoring of God's Sabbaths, idolatry becomes the natural consequence, and the acceptance of the pagan holidays of the world such as Sunday worship, Easter, and Christmas, that were never established by God, waltz in to our lives unopposed. These God calls abominations.

We will find in Leviticus 23 some very important facts. In Verse 2 of Leviticus 23 we find that the Lord claims the feast days mentioned here as His own! Again in Verse 44 we find, "Moses declared unto the children of Israel the *Feasts of the Lord*. This truth will become very important as we will soon see.

There are those who unwisely claim that God makes the statement that He hates His own Sabbaths and festivals. This is simply not true! In every verse cited it will be found that it is the days, festivals, new moons, and man-appointed days that God hates (Amos 5:21; 8:10, Isaiah 1:1-15). It is "her" mirth, "her" feast days, "her" new moons, and "her" Sabbaths, and solemn feasts that God will cause to cease, speaking of Israel (Hosea 2:11).

Ancient Israel did not continue to observe the holy days of God. They turned their backs on God's judgments and statutes (Ezekiel 20:18). Israel copied the idolatrous heathen feasts of the surrounding nations. History records this event. It takes place when the House of Israel separated from Judah. "And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made. So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel

the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense" (1 Kings 13:32-33).

From this point on Israel altered the new moons and changed the Sacred Calendar. They did a total about face and changed the Sabbaths of God for idolatrous days for *sun-worship*, the rest day was transferred from Saturday to Sunday.

The very statutes of the heathen that God destroyed and told Israel not to follow, Israel began to do, and do it *secretly* against the Lord their God (2 Kings 17:8-12). So the Lord God never hated or abolished His feasts, but He has always warned and hated the different days which Israel invented.

Just as Israel turned from God's feasts and turned to the idolatrous feasts of the heathen Baal, so also did her sister Judah. The first chapter of Isaiah is addressed to Judah specifically. Even though the Jews added their own appointed feasts and new moons, they also retained the Biblical new moons and Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies. They profaned them by idolatry and labor, turning them into abominations. God hated the manner in which the Jews treated His Holy Sabbath and festivals, "Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth" (Isaiah 1:13-14).

It was for these sins, they were driven out of Judea and lost the joy of keeping God's festivals and the joy that comes with obedience. Soon they became the property of their enemies and the Lord caused the solemn feasts and Sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion. (Lamentations 2:6).

We can be encouraged by looking to the future and the return of Jesus Christ who will bring good tidings and announces peace. He will also command once again the keeping of the

festivals of God. "And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 66:23). This is an invitation that is available to the called, chosen, and faithful today. These feasts of the Lord our God will not only be restored to Israel and Juda, but to the whole world. "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles" (Zechariah 14:16).

Review:

1. At the beginning of Galatians 4, Paul is addressing the Jews. He uses the word "we."
2. Paul had not mentioned one word about the Sabbath or God's Holy Days.
3. The Jews had been enslaved to worldly traditions, sinful practices inherited from the Gentiles.
4. These worldly traditions, which Paul called "elements of the world" came to be know as Judaism.
5. Jesus said, they rejected the commandment of God so that they could keep their own traditions.
6. In speaking to the Gentiles Paul uses the word "you."
7. The Gentile converts had not known God in times past, because they were cut off from Him.

8. *The false teachers were beguiling the Gentiles to return to their former ways.*

9. *Observing "Times" was a heathen practice for determining the pagan religious calendar.*

10. *The Greeks observed times and special days in honor of the dead.*

11. *Churches today celebrate pagan days in honor of the dead, called All souls day and All Saints Day, (called Halloween by the world).*

12. *Paul was concerned that these Gentiles were returning to these old pagan days.*

13. *Even today, many months of the year are named after the so called Greek Gods.*

14. *The feast day of the Baals are, Sunday, Easter, Christmas and Halloween.*

15. *It is man's appointed days that God hates.*

16. *It is, "her" mirth, "her" feast days, "her" new moons, and "her" sabbaths, and solemn feasts that God will cause to cease, speaking of Israel.*

17. *Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth, God said.*

18. *God caused the solemn feast and Sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion.*

19. *Jesus will bring good tidings, and announce peace.*

20. *Jesus will also command once again the keeping of the festivals of God.*

21. *The Feasts of the Lord our God will be restored to Israel, Juda, and the whole world.*

Conclusion:

After God had brought Israel out of Egypt, Moses challenged them to choose life, to obey God, and by doing so continue to experience His blessings. God does not force His will on anyone. He lets us decide whether to follow Him or reject Him. The decision we make is a very serious one because it is a matter of life or death. God the Father wants us to realize this, for He would like us all to choose life. Daily, in each new situation, we must make the choice of life or death, obedience to God, or fulfilling our own desires as we see them.

Jesus came to give us life in all it's fullness. This life Jesus came to give us is a rich, full and abundant life we can partake of even now. It is an Eternal Life, yet it begins immediately. Life in Christ is lived on a higher plane because of His overflowing forgiveness, love and guidance.

We are challenged now just as the Israelites were challenged, We can choose the sanctified Festivals of God, or the festivals of the world that masquerade as being Christian. Now is the time for us to grasp Christ's offer of life. Now is the time to choose the sanctified Festivals of God!

Notes:

HOME BIBLE

Study Course

17

Understanding The Sanctified and Unsanctified Feasts

Test Yourself

Write your answers
on a separate piece
of paper.
Check your answers
with the answers
found at the end of
the test.

True or False Questions

1. God's seventh day Sabbath is only for the Jews.
2. Jesus observed all of the traditions of the elders.
3. We must worship God in Spirit and in Truth.
4. Atonement is an uncovering of sin.
5. The Feast of Trumpets portrays a great time of peace.
6. Jesus and His apostles had nothing to do with the Holy Days.
7. The New Testament Church began on the day of Pentecost.
8. No one will keep the Feast of Tabernacles after Christ returns.
9. Passover represents Christ's sacrifice for all.
10. The Feast of Unleavened Bread represents putting sin out of your life.
11. God chose Israel to keep His oath which He had sworn to their Fathers.
12. Pagan ideas of worship are OK if we Christianize them.
13. The children of Israel never followed any pagan rites.
14. God will allow us to worship Him any way we choose.
15. Some in Israel carried a Babylonian tabernacle.
16. The Gentile converts of Colossi were observing God's annual Sabbaths.
17. Because they were keeping God's Days the Colossians were being judged.
18. Philosophy is a good thing no matter where it comes from.
19. Paul speaks out against the rudiment of the world, like God's Holy Days.
20. We are complete in Christ Jesus.
21. God dwelt in Christ and some of the worldly philosophers.
22. The Colossians were uncircumcised Gentiles before conversion.
23. Through penance and living a life of asceticism you can pay for your sins.
24. We can live the way we want to and Christ will still blot out our sins.

17

Understanding The Sanctified and Unsanctified Feasts

Test Yourself (Continued)

25. The debt we have incurred is the death penalty. Is that true?

26. Colossians 2: 13,14 speaks all about blotting out God's "penalty of the law".

27. The Colossians incurred trespasses by following sinful ordinances.

28. It is clear to see that Paul is doing away with the "law of Moses."

29. God gives His Spirit to those who obey Jesus Christ.

30. God's Holy Days foreshadow things to come.

31. The Colossians were keeping Holy the sanctified days God made Holy.

32. The Gentile converts always knew God all their lives.

33. The false teachers wanted the Gentiles to return to keeping God's Sabbaths.

34. Observing "Times" was a heathen practice for determining the pagan calendar.

35. God likes to be worshiped using man's appointed days.

36. Will Jesus really command the keeping of God's Festivals?

37. The Feast days of the Baals are Sunday Easter, Christmas and Halloween.

38. Your new moons and your appointed feasts, do not belong to God.

39. God never caused the solemn feast and Sabbaths to be forgotten.

40. Paul was concerned that the Gentile converts were returning to God's Festivals..

We encourage you to continue your study through daily Bible reading, by taking advantage of our free literature and CD offers, and by attending Sabbath and festival Services when possible. For information on the Church of God International congregation nearest you, write to The Church of God International, 3900 Timms St., Tyler, TX 75701, call the home office at (903) 939-2929, or visit www.cgj.org.

Answers to True or False Questions: Score Yourself: Miss 0-3 = Excellent; Miss 4-6 = Good; Miss 7-9 = Fair

Answers: 1. False 2. False 3. True 4. False 5. False 6. False 7. True 8. False 9. True 10. True 11. True 12. False 13. False 14. False 15. True 16. True 17. True 18. False 19. False 20. True 21. False 22. True 23. False 24. False 25. True 26. True 27. True 28. False 29. True 30. True 31. True 32. False 33. False 34. True 35. False 36. True 37. True 38. True 39. False 40. False