

the truth about the feast days

Should we keep the feast days? What does the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy have to say on this topic?

There were three primary annual feasts (*DA 75, 447; Ed 41-42; MH 281; PP 311, 537; 3T 395*)—Passover, Pentecost, and Feast of Tabernacles,—plus several others. Let us journey through the year, and consider each one in turn:

THE PASSOVER AND FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

The Passover occurred on the 14th day of Abib (or Nisan), the first month in the Hebrew year. It is of interest that it occurred at the lambing season—when a lamb was available for the sacrifice. This was also a time when the moon was full.

On the next day, the Feast of Unleavened Bread began (*Lev 23:5-8; Num 28:17-25*). The entire cluster continued on for a total of seven days.

In the Spirit of Prophecy, we are given the following information about the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread:

The Passover was the first of the three great annual feasts (*PP 537*), and the one most largely attended (*DA 75*). It was the great national gathering of the Jews (*DA 652; GC 17*). It occurred on the 14th day of the first Jewish month (*PP 486, 539; GC 399*), the month Abib (*PP 537*), and corresponded to the last of March or the beginning of April (*PP 537-538; DA 76*). When it occurred, the spring flowers were in full bloom (*DA 76, 365-366; 377-378*) and the moon was full (*PP 537; DA 674, 685, 802*).

This event was at the beginning of barley harvest (*PP 539; DA 77*), which was the first harvest of the year—since barley was the earliest grain in Palestine (*PP 539*). At the opening of the feast, it was beginning to ripen (*PP 539*). A lamb without blemish was slain (*PP 274; DA 653; 3SG 223*) as our Passover.

On the day after the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread began and continued on for seven days (*PP 539; DA 77*). No servile work was to be

performed on the first day of this feast (*PP 539*). On the second day, the wave sheaf was presented (*PP 539; DA 77, 785-786; GC 399*). This was the first fruits of the year's harvest, which was presented on that day (*PP 539; DA 77; 6BC 1092; GC 399*), and it was presented just before the actual harvest began (*PP 539; DA 786; 1SM 305*).

These details correlate with facts given in the Bible about the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread (*see Ex 12-1:28; 23:5-14; Lev 23:4-8; Num 28:16-25; Deut 18:1-8*).

As we consider the above facts about this early spring gathering, we find meanings which are both deep and profound:

First, there is the application to Christ:

The Lamb was available when Calvary occurred. Christ had been born into our world, and the time had come for Him to lay down His life on our behalf. On the Passover day, Christ died for our sins. He was the Lamb of God, sent to be sacrificed on our behalf. He was without sin, for He had chosen never to participate in it. (Because Christ took our fallen human nature, His sinlessness was, by His personal choice, made in spite of the temptations of Satan; *see Hebrews 1-4*.)

The next day was a holy convocation for the study of God's Word, which, we are told, many definitely did that Sabbath. The second day of the feast (which, that year, fell on the first day of the week) was the day on which the wave sheaf was presented.—And on that day, the Saviour went to the Father and presented Himself on our behalf. Then He returned and witnessed to the disciples on the way to the Upper Room, in Emmaus. Soon after, the actual harvest from all lands began. That harvest continues today.

Then, second, there is an application to ourselves: The death of Christ for our sins was the great event which made all the other symbolic fulfillments

of the feasts possible. Each one who would be saved must go to the cross, and there receive forgiveness and enabling strength to begin his journey through the symbolized events of the antitypical year. As, individually, we come to Jesus and are accepted in the Beloved, it is springtime in our hearts. Even the night hours are illuminated by a full moon of peace and happiness. The first fruits of our lives are given to God, and He accepts it. In newness of life, we arise and go out and begin our own participation in the harvest, as we begin witnessing to others.

But now for the question: Should we today keep the Passover?

I suggest that we should not. First, because it is fulfilled. Second, because we are told in Inspiration that it has been ended and should not now be kept. Third, because we have been told that it and all the other ceremonial activities have been abolished.

First, it has been fulfilled: This fact about the Passover is stated more frequently than any other in the Spirit of Prophecy about that service:

The Passover lamb was a type of Christ (*PP 277; DA 77, 388-389, 642, 732; GC 399*).

Type reached antitype at Passover (*3SG 225*).

Christ, our Passover Lamb, was sacrificed for us (*PP 277; GC 399; AH 324; 7BC 914*).

The animals sacrificed during Passover represented the one great Sacrifice (*DA 154-155*).

The blood of the Passover lamb prefigured Christ's atoning blood: *3SG 225*.

The Passover pointed to Christ's death for mankind (*DA 774*).

Christ was the antitypical Passover Lamb (*DA 571; 3SG 225*).

The Passover typified Christ's death (*PP 277; DA 51, 82, 154-155, 652; GC 399; 6BC 1090*).

The blood of the Passover lamb symbolized Christ's shed blood (*DA 51*).

The atonement of Christ was prefigured by the death of the Passover lamb (*3SG 228*).

The shadow of Christ's death was the death of the lamb at Passover time (*GC 399*).

The presenting of the wave sheaf was fulfilled at that time.

Christ rose from the dead as the antitypical wave sheaf (*DA 785; GC 399; 1SM 305, 307*).

As the wave sheaf, He was the first fruits of the righteous dead (*DA 785-786, 834; 6BC 1092; 1SM 305-307*).

As the wave sheaf, He presented Himself to the Father (*DA 834; 1SM 305, 307*).

Christ is the antitypical wave sheaf (*DA 77, 785-786; GC 399; 1SM 305*).

The truth is that we are not to keep a ceremony after it is fulfilled. The Passover ceremony was to be

kept until Christ died. After that, it was no longer of any significance. Type had met antitype, and to continue to keep it afterward would be to deny the fact that the antitype had been fulfilled! The Jews do that. They deny that Christ was the promised Messiah, and that is why they continue to keep the Passover each year. No, they do not sacrifice lambs; but they still continue to keep the Passover.

Well, then, does the Passover not have any meaning for us today? It has great meaning! As we study it, we are to praise God for the passing over of the destroying angel! We are to present Christ as our Passover Lamb to our children (*AH 324*). We are to come daily to that Lamb ourselves, and give Him all our lives.

But dying to sin in Christ and rising to newness of life in Him—is far different than keeping the Passover! The one accepts Him; the other questions whether He was the real Messiah to come. Think about it; it is true.

That is why we are told that those who attended the ritual services after Calvary—even one day after—were on the wrong track:

"They were not conscious that type had met antitype, that an infinite sacrifice had been made for the sins of the world. They knew not that there was no further value in the performance of the ritual service."—*Desire of Ages, 774*.

As far as God was concerned, Passover attendance was *finished* when Christ died on Calvary. If that be true, should it not be the same for us today?

Here are the two classic statements on the Passover. Consider their meaning carefully:

The first passage clearly shows the finality—the end—of this service at Calvary, and explains the ordinance which God gave us to take the place of Passover attendance:

"On the fourteenth day of the month, at even, the Passover was celebrated; its solemn, impressive ceremonies commemorating the deliverance from bondage in Egypt, and pointing forward to the sacrifice that should deliver from the bondage of sin. When the Saviour yielded up His life on Calvary, the significance of the Passover ceased, and the ordinance of the Lord's Supper was instituted as a memorial of the same event of which the Passover had been a type."—*Patriarchs and Prophets, 539*.

The second statement is, if possible, even more striking. The fulfillment of Passover was a great watershed—nay, rather a continental divide—between two different eras:

"The Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took

the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, 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.' 1 Cor. 11:23-26.

"Christ was standing at the point of transition between two economies and their two great festivals. He, the spotless Lamb of God, was about to present Himself as a sin offering, that He would thus bring to an end the system of types and ceremonies that for four thousand years had pointed to His death. As He ate the Passover with His disciples, He instituted in its place the service that was to be the memorial of His great sacrifice. The national festival of the Jews was to pass away forever. The service which Christ established was to be observed by His followers in all lands and through all ages.

The Passover was ordained as a commemoration of the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage. God had directed that, year by year, as the children should ask the meaning of this ordinance, the history should be repeated. Thus the wonderful deliverance was to be kept fresh in the minds of all. The ordinance of the Lord's supper was given to commemorate the great deliverance wrought out as the result of the death of Christ. Till He shall come the second time in power and glory, this ordinance is to be celebrated. It is the means by which His great work for us is to be kept fresh in our minds."—*Desire of Ages*, 652-653.

But, someone will say, "Attending Passover meetings today is 'new light.' Ellen White did not have it all!" But, do you not see that that is what men said in the early centuries? God had given them the Bible Sabbath, yet they thought themselves sufficient to seek out a different day on which to worship their Creator. Eve committed a similar error in Eden, when she decided God did not mean what He said about that tree.

Here are some additional facts about the Passover:

The Hebrew word for Passover was *pesah*, which meant to leap over, or, figuratively, to spare, or show mercy. Although the Passover was only the first day of the seven-day service (the rest of which was the Feast of Unleavened Bread), the entire cluster came to be called the "Passover" by the Jews. *Read Exodus 12:1-28 for a full description of its origin.* It is of interest that it was not until the Passover occurred that the Jewish nation began. It is not until a soul comes to Calvary that the birth of another Christian occurs.

Not a bone of the Passover lamb was to be broken (*Ex 12:46; Num 9:12*), and not a bone of Christ's body was broken (*Jn 19:36*). The flesh of the lamb was to be eaten (*Ex 12:7*); so, by faith, we are to partake of Christ (*Jn 6:51*). The Feast of Unleavened

Bread immediately followed the Passover. No leaven was to be used during that time, so we are to renounce and put away the sins we confessed and verbally forsook at conversion (*Ex 12:15; 1 Cor 5:8*).

The death of the lamb was not enough to assure salvation; the blood must be struck on the doorpost and lintel (*Ex 12:7, 22*). That alone could avert the stroke of the death angel (*Ex 12:23*). It is not enough to come to Calvary; the cleansing blood must be applied to the heart. It is not enough to confess our sins at the cross; we must put them away thereafter as we henceforth walk with Christ. Christ is our Passover (*1 Cor 5:7*), and when God sees the blood sprinkled, He commands His angels to pass over us (*Ex 12:22-23*). The death of the lamb provided the means of salvation for the people; the application of the blood to their lives and practices made efficacious the means provided (*John 6:51*). Both were necessary.

By His blood we are saved from death by the destroying angel; by eating His flesh and staying away from leaven we live thereafter.

Leaven stands for malice, wickedness (*1 Cor 5:8*), false doctrine (*Matt 16:6; Mark 8:15*), greed and injustice (*Matt 23:14*), hypocrisy (*Matt 23:25-28*), cruelty (*Matt 23:34-36*), skepticism (*Matt 22:23*), and flattery and worldliness (*Matt 22:16-21*). All this is to be put away if we are to go to heaven. It is not enough to imagine that "only believe" will save us. It was crucial that, in order to avert the destroying angel, that the all leaven be put away. The house had to be searched. Every nook and cranny had to be examined. Everything had to bear the mark of "holiness to the Lord."

After Christ came, there could be no more virtue in the Passover. In the communion service, we are to remember the Lord till He come (*1 Cor 11:26*).

The second day after the Passover was to be a special work day. Three men were to go out into the field and get the barley sheaf, which was then to be presented before the Lord (*Lev 23:11*). On the second day after the Passover, Christ went to heaven to present Himself to the Father on behalf of His people. He did that on a working day, the first working day in the week.

THE FEAST OF PENTICOST

Pentecost is the second major feast in the yearly cycle. The most important Bible passages relating to it are *Exodus 23:16; Leviticus 23:15-22; Numbers 28:26-31; and Deuteronomy 16:9-12*. It occurred 50 days after the presentation of the wave sheaf (*Ex 23:16; 34:22; Num 28:26-31*), on the 6th day of the 3rd month. (Recall that the wave sheaf was offered two days after Passover.)

This gathering was called the Feast of Weeks (*Ex*

34:22; Deut 16:10, 16:2 Chron 8:13) because it occurred seven complete weeks, or fifty days, after the Passover (Lev 23:15-16). It was called the Feast of Harvest (Ex 23:16) because it concluded the harvest of the later grains. It was called the Day of First Fruits (Num 23:26) because the first loaves made from the new grain were then offered on the altar (Lev 23:17).

This was the first of two great agricultural feasts, timed to coincide with the first fruits of the wheat harvest, a few weeks after the March-April barley harvest and seven weeks after the first sickle went into the barley (Deut 16:9).

Pentecost did not originate with any particular historic event, but instead pointed to certain ones. Pentecost occurred at the time of the harvest, and was concerned with it. That was why the people gathered together; it was the beginning of the wheat harvest. For this reason, as soon as Pentecost arrived, they hurried away to gather in the harvest, which was what Pentecost was all about.

It is of interest that Jewish rabbis believe there may be a connection between the giving of the law at Sinai and the Feast of Pentecost. The Jews, at least as early as the days of Christ, believed that the Ten Commandments were given by Heaven to the people on the sixth day of Sivan. (Note Exodus 19, which indicates that the law was given on the 15th day after the exodus.) They therefore conjectured that Pentecost may commemorate the giving of the law because of a reference to the law in Deuteronomy 16:12 (read Deut 16:10-12 with Ex 20:2). We will return to this possibility below.

Should we keep Pentecost today? Considering the evidence, we find that Pentecost began to be fulfilled during Christ's life, and has been in the process of fulfillment ever since.

The first great antypical fulfillment is well-known: It occurred in Acts 2, at the time when the Feast of Pentecost was observed the same year in which Jesus died on Calvary. Forty days after His ascension on wave sheaf day, He ascended to heaven; and, ten days later, the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit and began witnessing with great power.

Read Acts 2 carefully. All the details of that antypical fulfillment are there. The Spirit of Prophecy is equally clear in locating the antypical fulfillment as beginning at that point in history (AA 35-46; SR 241-247).

But Pentecost—as an experience—has been in a state of continual fulfillment ever since. As the servants of Christ journeyed outward, they carried with them the message of a dying, risen, soon-coming Saviour to all the world. That message continues on in our time. The hallmark of Pentecost is the early

rain experience. We are to have that experience today. It is not something for the future. We are to have it now. It is empowerment for witnessing.

And what are we to witness to? The fact that there is salvation in Jesus Christ, and that salvation consists of forgiveness of sin and empowerment to obey the Ten Commandments (Rev 14:12). The Third Angel's Message has always been the message for mankind, the pathway to heaven, but in these last days—when the law of God is almost totally ignored—it has special application. The rabbis were correct in noting the possible relationship (in Deuteronomy) of Pentecost to the giving of the law.

Not only has Pentecost been in operation for nearly 2,000 years, but it will achieve a final climax in the closing up of the Third Angel's Message (GC 611-612; also read 4T 303; 8T 246; ML 58). The Loud Cry will be the concluding fulfillment of the Pentecostal experience, as the latter rain is poured out upon God's faithful ones.

Should we then keep Pentecost today? No,—but we should strive to enter into the experience of Pentecost! Put away your sins and seek God for help in ministering to others. Gather together to plead for souls, and dedicate your lives anew to Him. That is always in order—any time of the year. But let us not gather to “keep Pentecost.”

You see, whereas the ancients were to gather for this feast in the early summer, we today are to gather around the sanctuary in heaven, and plead for souls. That is our appointed work. That is what Pentecost points us to. For it is Pentecost which teaches us the way into the heavenly sanctuary. Those who reject His first coming will reject Him in His crucifixion as their Saviour, and they will then reject the Pentecostal pleading for a deeper experience and the winning of souls—which will lead them into the sanctuary experience:

“I was pointed back to the proclamation of the first advent of Christ. John was sent in the spirit and power of Elijah to prepare the way for Jesus. Those who rejected the testimony of John were not benefited by the teachings of Jesus. Their opposition to the message that foretold His coming placed them where they could not readily receive the strongest evidence that He was the Messiah. Satan led on those who rejected the message of John to go still farther, to reject and crucify Christ. In doing this they placed themselves where they could not receive the blessing on the day of Pentecost, which would have taught them the way into the heavenly

Continued on the next tract

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PART TWO OF THREE

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

sanctuary. The rending of the veil of the temple showed that the Jewish sacrifices and ordinances would no longer be received. The great Sacrifice had been offered and had been accepted, and the Holy Spirit which descended on the day of Pentecost carried the minds of the disciples from the earthly sanctuary to the heavenly, where Jesus had entered by His own blood, to shed upon His disciples the benefits of His atonement. But the Jews were left in total darkness. They lost all the light which they might have had upon the plan of salvation, and still trusted in their useless sacrifices and offerings. The heavenly sanctuary had taken the place of the earthly, yet they had no knowledge of the change. Therefore they could not be benefited by the mediation of Christ in the holy place.”—*Early Writings*, 259-260.

Now you know the truth about Pentecost. It is not a formal meeting at a certain time of the year; it is to be an experience for us today, an experience we need, an experience God wants us to share in—and tell others about.

It is of interest that Pentecost is closely linked to Passover. The witnessing will ever be grounded in the truths of Calvary. And Pentecost points us to the sanctuary, where Christ is pleading on our behalf.

THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS

We now pass through the rest of the summer to the first fall gathering. The Feast of Trumpets occurred on the 1st day of the seventh month. This was *Tisri* (*Tishri*, or *Ethanim*), which was also the beginning of the civil year. At this feast, trumpets were blown. This feast lasted ten days; the tenth day was the Day of Atonement.

It is of interest that this feast occurred at the time of the seventh new moon in the year. The septenary gatherings were these: (1) The weekly Sabbath; (2) the seventh new moon feast (Trumpets); (3) the sabbatic year, held every seventh year (Ex 23:10-11; Lev 25:2-7); (4) the year of jubilee (Lev 25:8-16; 27:16-25).

What is the meaning of this Feast of Trumpets? It obviously was the preparatory service for the Day of Atonement. It also symbolized a time of new beginning, and began the civil year. But was not the Passover the beginning?

The Passover came shortly after the beginning of the sacred year (*Ex 12:2*), while the Trumpets/Atonement cluster marked the beginning of the civil year. The first brought us to God, and we began our Christian walk through the events of the year. The second is the judgment as the time of our probation closes.

Where in history does the Feast of Trumpets fit in?

It began with the call to judgment in the middle of the last century. William Miller and other early Advent messengers began proclaiming it, yet without fully realizing all the facts and implications. Is this feast still in progress? Yes, it is.

Should we then keep the Feast of Trumpets today? My friend, we should go out and give the message of the trumpets! It is the message of the three angels. We should warn everyone to prepare for that moment when the investigative judgment will pass to their names! We should tell them about obedience to the law of God by faith through the forgiving, enabling grace of Jesus Christ (*Rev 14:12*)—which, in verity, is the Third Angel’s Message. That is what righteousness by faith is. It is not just forgiveness, nor is it merely justification. It is a glorious experience of clean, Christian living empowered by Christ. For, without Him, we can do nothing.

All year long—not merely in October—gather together and seek the face of the Lord. All year long, go out and share the wonderful Advent message. Make the Trumpet experience a year-long way of life, not a ten-days-in-October gathering. Why? Because we are living in the antitype, not in the type! It is too late for typical living. We must now be engaged in doing our part in antitypical fulfillments.

Did you know that the Pentecostal blessing is to be found in the sanctuary above where Christ mediates on our behalf? That is where the empowerment is, for that is where Christ is. When we sit together with Christ in heavenly places, we can work with Him to reach the lost.

“Satan led on those who rejected the message of John to go still farther, to reject and crucify Christ. In doing this they placed themselves where they could not receive the blessing on the day of Pentecost, which would have taught them the way into the heavenly Sanctuary. The rending of the veil of

the temple showed that the Jewish sacrifices and ordinances would no longer be received.”—*Early Writings*, 259-260.

It was the work of God in Pentecost to direct the minds of the believers to Jesus, as He ministered on their behalf in the heavenly sanctuary.

“The great Sacrifice had been offered and had been accepted, and the Holy Spirit which descended on the day of Pentecost carried the minds of the disciples from the earthly sanctuary to the heavenly, where Jesus had entered by His own blood, to shed upon His disciples the benefits of His atonement. But the Jews were left in total darkness. They lost all the light which they might have had upon the plan of salvation, and still trusted in their useless sacrifices and offerings. The heavenly sanctuary had taken the place of the earthly, yet they had no knowledge of the change. Therefore they could not be benefited by the mediation of Christ in the holy place.”—*Early Writings*, 260.

As the wave sheaf was presented at the beginning of the grain harvest, so, fifty days later, the two loaves (Lev 23:17-18; PP 540) were presented at the end of the grain harvest. In all, the people showed their dependence upon God for all His blessings.

There was exactly fifty days between the resurrection of Christ and the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost. But the outpouring was preceded by ten days of supplication and pleading for the Holy Spirit. We have a work to do today.

Just as the wave sheaf was presented as a first fruits and Christ arose that day to present Himself to the Father; so, fifty days later, Christ presented the first fruits of the dead whom He raised—and presented them to the Father (Eph 4:8; Matt 27:52-53).

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

This major event occurred on the 10th day of the 7th month (*Tisri*), and was the tenth and last day of the Feast of Trumpets. For nine days the people had been searching their hearts and seeking the Lord. Then came the monumental events of that tenth day.

The typical and antitypical service is discussed in detail in our book, *The Biblical Sanctuary* (now in our *Biblical Sanctuary Tractbook*). *Carefully read Leviticus 16.*

In the type, the tabernacle was cleansed of the recorded sins of the people. All who did not care to participate in the service were cut off from the people (Lev 23:27-32). They participated by putting away sin, pleading with God for forgiveness, and deepening their experience with Him. New theology thinking had no part in the thoughts of the faithful on the Day of Atonement.

In a sense, the Day of Atonement marked the end of the year and the beginning of a new, restored, cleansed era. Symbolic of that fact was the command, given by Heaven, that, every fiftieth year on that day, the trumpet was blown signaling the beginning of the year of jubilee (Lev 25:9-10). The conclusion of the Day of Atonement also marked the onset of something totally new.

In the antitype, the Day of Atonement began on October 22, 1844. It is still in progress. We are now to be putting away sin and yielding our lives, through the help of Jesus, in fullest obedience to the law of God. Is ours today to be the Trumpets experience or the Day of Atonement experience? Both. Keep in mind that, although the antitypical final atonement has begun, it has not yet passed to the cases of the living. So we are to combine both experiences.

Should we meet together on the October Day of Atonement? We are living in the antitype; we should gather in groups all year long and prepare our hearts, by study and prayer, for the judgment. We are to go out all year and blow the trumpet—not only in Zion, but to all the world. Tell everyone: “The judgment is soon to pass to the cases of the living! Are you prepared? Do you want to get ready? Here is how:

“The antitypical trumpets and atonement experience leads to the judgment scene, when the books of record in heaven are examined. Books are opened, names and actions are considered, decisions are made. It is all a very solemn affair. Please, again, read carefully chapters 23, 24, and 28 in *Great Controversy*. There you will find true theology about the entire process. Because it will affect your eternal destiny, should you not know it well? Should it not become an integral part of your everyday life? I realize that I am the only pastor that many of you have, and I plead with you for your best good and the best good of your loved ones.”

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

Now we come to a different kind of feast. As already noted, in a sense the old year is past and a whole new one has begun. It is the “new age” in the right sense. For heaven has begun.

This was the third of the great annual feasts (the other two being Passover and Pentecost). It was called the Feast of Tabernacles, Tents, or Booths (2 Chron 8:13; Ezra 3:4; Zech 14:16, 18-19; Jn 7:2) because the Israelites were told to live in these simple structures during the feast (*cf. Lev 23:43*). It was also called the Feast of Ingathering (Ex 23:16; 34:22) because it was held after the ingathering of the harvest and fruits. For further study of this feast, see Ex 23:16; Lev 23:34-36, 39-43; Deut 16:13-15; 31:10-13; Neh 8:1-18.

The Feast of Tabernacles began on the 15th of

the seventh month (*Tisri*), and lasted seven days (*Deut 16:13; Lev 23:36; Ezek 45:25*). But, later, an eighth day was added (*Neh 8:18*), and was observed as a sabbatic rest. The labors of the old year were past.

Where does this feast fit into the antitypes? It comes after the Day of Atonement, and is a time when all the people live in booths made of tree branches. When would that be? They gather together to rejoice. Why? because the harvest is past.

So we have here a yearly gathering which has not yet met its antitype. May we today keep the Feast of Tabernacles?

It is of interest that, in regard to this one feast, we are told that we may observe a gathering like it:

“Well would it be for the people of God at the present time to have a Feast of Tabernacles—a joyous commemoration of the blessings of God to them. As the children of Israel celebrated the deliverance that God had wrought for their fathers, and His miraculous preservation of them during their journeyings from Egypt, so should we gratefully call to mind the various ways He has devised for bringing us out from the world, and from the darkness of error, into the precious light of His grace and truth.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 540-541.

Notice, in the above paragraph, that this was to be a gathering to recall the blessings of God and express thanks to Him for them. Soon, very soon, when the final crisis is past, the Atonement is ended, and we have taken our journey to heaven, we will all sit around the great table in heaven for the marriage supper of the Lamb. Then, with all the redeemed reunited, we will take part in the antitypical Feast of Tabernacles.

“This feast was to be pre-eminently an occasion of rejoicing. It occurred just after the great Day of Atonement, when the assurance had been given that their iniquity should be remembered no more. At peace with God, they now came before Him to acknowledge His goodness and to praise Him for His mercy. The labors of the harvest being ended, and the toils of the new year not begun, the people were free from care, and could give themselves up to the sacred, joyous influences of the hour.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 540.

The Feast of Tabernacles was the last feast of the year, and normally occurred in early or middle part of October. The Day of Atonement was past, and all sins and misunderstandings were past. Everything was new. This feast looked forward to the great marriage supper of the Lamb with His people in heaven (*Matt 8:11*).

It is well to gather together for meetings of mutual encouragement and instruction.

“At these yearly assemblies the hearts of old and

young would be encouraged in the service of God, while the association of the people from the different quarters of the land would strengthen the ties that bound them to God and to one another.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 540.

“With those who lived at a distance from the tabernacle, more than a month of every year must have been occupied in attendance upon the annual feasts. This example of devotion to God should emphasize the importance of religious worship and the necessity of subordinating our selfish, worldly interests to those that are spiritual and eternal. We sustain a loss when we neglect the privilege of associating together to strengthen and encourage one another in the service of God. The truths of His word lose their vividness and importance in our minds. Our hearts cease to be enlightened and aroused by the sanctifying influence, and we decline in spirituality.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 541.

Yet we must not imagine that those particular feasts are still to be kept today. There is no command anywhere in the New Testament to do so. There is no command in the Spirit of Prophecy to do so. We are told that it would be well to keep the Feast of Tabernacles, but we are not commanded to keep it.

Read this:

“Men and women may study the will of God with profit. Let young men and young women, while the dew of youth is upon them, begin to study the Word of God, which expresses His will. The steps of Christ are certainly marked out in the Word. Go where they can be found today. Do not seek to go back to the land where Christ’s feet trod ages ago. Christ says: ‘He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.’ We can know far more of Christ by following Him step by step in the work of redemption, seeking the lost and the perishing, than by journeying to old Jerusalem. Christ has taken His people into His church. *He has swept away every ceremony of the ancient type. He has given no liberty to restore these rites, or to substitute anything that will recall the old literal sacrifices.* The Lord requires of His people spiritual sacrifices alone. Everything pertaining to His worship is placed under the superintendence of His Holy Spirit. Jesus said that the Father would send the Holy Spirit in His name to teach His disciples all things, and to bring all things unto their remembrance that He had said unto them. The curse rests upon Jerusalem. The Lord has obliterated those things which men would worship in and about Jerusalem, yet many hold in reverence literal objects in Palestine, while they neglect to behold Jesus as their advocate in the heaven of heavens.”—*Review and Herald*, February 25, 1896 [*Italics ours*].

Recall again the experience of the people in the wilderness. God commanded them to go forward into the promised land. But they decided to follow a different path—by remaining in the wilderness. Later, He commanded them to remain in the wilderness; it was no longer His will that they go forward. But again they chose something different. *Their sin was not doing what God comanded, when He comanded it.* There was a time, earlier in history, when the people of God were to keep the feasts. But later a time came when they were not to do so. It is right to go to church on Saturday morning; it is not right to do so on Sunday morning. The command of God makes all the difference.

There was a time when God commanded His people to keep the Old Testament feasts. But, later, He opened up something different for them to do—and that was an antitypical experience of the feasts, which was not an attendance, but a pattern of living.

But we are still to gather for meetings of instruction and thanksgiving! Yes, indeed. It is well that we do that. But let us not call those gatherings “Passover,” etc. The Word of God is clear: We are no longer living in the ceremonial shadow of the cross, but after Calvary. Are we not misrepresenting what we believe, when others learn that we are gathering together for a “Passover”?

Thank God for His Word. It leads us all the way to the City of God. It is our only guide to heaven. I want to remain on the pathway God marks out. I am sure you want to do so also.

THE OTHER FEASTS

There were two other feasts which might also be noted briefly. Neither of them were instituted by Moses:

Purim was observed on the 14th and 15th days of Adar, the last month of the sacred year (February-March), to mark the deliverance of the Jews from Haman’s plots to kill Mordecai and the Jewish people. *Read Esther 9:21-28* for details. During this feast, the Book of Esther is read in the evening of the 14th, and again in the morning of the 15th.

Hanukkah (*Chanukah*) began on the 25th day of Chislev, which was the 9th sacred month (November-December), and ran eight days. For this feast, torches were carried and the interiors of houses and places of worship were lit in the evening. This feast was held in memory of the rededication of the Temple by Judas Maccabaeus in 165 B.C. (*1 Maccabees 4:52-59 has the story.*) Other names for this feast were the Feast of Dedication and the Feast of Lights. This was probably the “winter” feast mentioned in John 10:22 (*cf. DA 470*).

REVIEW

What then have we learned? Several interesting things:

1 - Both the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy indicate that all the ceremonials were done away with at the cross. (*Read Acts 15 and the Spirit of Prophecy quotations later in this study.*)

2 - Beginning at Calvary, the keeping of the annual feasts became a year-long, personal experience rather than a scheduled meeting on certain days in certain months.

3 - What is to be done today, in substitution for keeping each of those feasts?

Rather than keeping a Passover and wave sheaf, we are to come to Christ, accept Him as our Saviour, confess and forsake our sins, and take hold of His empowering strength to enable us to obey His Written Word. Christ is our Passover now, not attendance at Passover meetings. The antitypical Passover is being a Christian.

Rather than observing a Pentecost, we are to pray for the infilling of the Holy Spirit, as the disciples did in antitype. This is to be a morning-by-morning experience. Then we are to go out and witness our faith to others. Share books and tracts, and give Bible studies. The antitypical Pentecost is evangelism—both personal and public.

Rather than attending a Feast of Trumpets, we are to prepare our hearts for the judgment, and we are to symbolically blow the trumpet both in Zion and in the world, warning others to prepare for the coming crisis. We are to call the attention of men and women to the great issues of salvation, which are so summarily stated in Revelation 14:12.

Rather than gathering ourselves to an October Day of Atonement meeting, we are, by faith, to gather around the sanctuary above—and, in boldness of holy faith, we are to enter it! Approaching the majestic throne of grace, we are to bow in trembling and supplication—and plead for grace to overcome and witness to others. We are to study the sanctuary message in depth, and we are to share it with others. It is a great tragedy that few of our own people know that message, yet they have been called out of the world with the express commission of sharing that, as well as other Advent truths, with the world.

We may wish to attend a Feast of Tabernacles to rejoice in the blessings God gives us. But, best of all, we may do this all year long! We may express our thanksgiving to Christ for His manifold blessings every day in the year, and do all in our power to

Continued on the next tract

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the truth about the feast days

PART THREE OF THREE

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

encourage and strengthen the faith of everyone we meet throughout the year.

4 - There is a controversy in the denomination at this time over the word "Catholic." Some of our pastors and leaders want us to call ourselves and our faith "catholic." But others recognize that we should not at all identify ourselves or our faith with Catholicism.

The same holds true for the Jewish ceremonials. In order to warn us against doing that, we were given many statements in command. Consider these statements:

"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross;

"And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come: but the body is of Christ."—*Colossians 2:14-17*.

Clearly then, according to Paul, the days are shadows. Second, we remember that the same law that establishes the sacrifices also establishes the days, and that law, the ceremonial law, is done away. This is the message of *Colossians 2:14-17* and of *Ephesians 2:11-15*. It is also the message of many references in Ellen White's writings.

"There are two distinct laws brought to view. One is the law of types and shadows, which reached to the time of Christ, and ceased when type met antitype in His death."—*Signs of the Times, July 29, 1886*.

"The Jewish ceremonial law has passed away."—*Review and Herald, October 10, 1899*.

"If Adam had not transgressed the law of God, the ceremonial law would never have been instituted."—*1 Selected Messages, 230*.

"While the Saviour's death brought to an end the law of types and shadows, it did not in the least detract from the obligation of the moral law."—*Patriarchs and Prophets, 365*.

"When Jesus at His ascension entered by His own blood into the heavenly sanctuary to shed upon His disciples the blessings of His mediation, the Jews

were left in total darkness to continue their useless sacrifices and offerings. The ministration of types and shadows had ceased."—*Great Controversy, 430*.

"His lessons to His disciples are received by all who would become His disciples, to the end of time. These lessons discharge His followers from the bondage of the ceremonial law, and leave them the ordinance of baptism to be received by repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as the only One who can take away sin."—*Review and Herald, June 21, 1898*.

"When type met antitype in the death of Christ, the sacrificial offerings ceased. The ceremonial law was done away."—*Review and Herald, June 26, 1900*.

"After Christ died on the cross as a sin offering, the ceremonial law could have no force."—*Lift Him Up, 147*.

"Peter here referred to the law of ceremonies which was made null and void by the crucifixion of Christ."—*Acts of the Apostles, 194*.

"Many in the Christian world also have a veil before their eyes and heart. They do not see to the end of that which was done away. They do not see that it was only the ceremonial law which was abrogated at the death of Christ."—*1 Selected Messages, 239*.

"This ritual law, with its sacrifices and ordinances, was to be performed by the Hebrews until type met antitype in the death of Christ, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Then all the sacrificial offerings were to cease. It is this law that Christ 'took . . . out of the way, nailing it to His cross.' *Colossians 2:14*."—*Patriarchs and Prophets, 365*.

"But there is a law which was abolished, which Christ 'took out of the way, nailing it to His cross.' Paul calls it the law of commandments contained in ordinances.' This ceremonial law, given by God through Moses, with its sacrifices and ordinances, . . . to be binding upon the Hebrews until type met antitype in the death of Christ as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world. Then all the sacrificial offerings and services were to be abolished. Paul and the other apostles labored to show this, and resolutely withstood those Judaizing teachers who declared that Christians should observe the ceremonial law."—*Signs of the Times, September*

4, 1884.

5 - One question remains: Were all the annual feasts typical? Yes, they all were. Each had a future fulfillment. Each looked forward to a certain event or cluster of events.

However, one feast was also a memorial of a past event. This was the Feast of Tabernacles.

“The Feast of Tabernacles was not only commemorative but typical. It not only pointed back to the wilderness sojourn, but, as the feast of harvest, it celebrated the ingathering of the fruits of the earth, and pointed forward to the great day of final ingathering, when the Lord of the harvest shall send forth His reapers to gather the tares together in bundles for the fire, and to gather the wheat into His garner. At that time the wicked will all be destroyed. They will become ‘as though they had not been.’ Obadiah 16. And every voice in the whole universe will unite in joyful praise to God. Says the revelator, ‘Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever.’ Rev 5:13.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 541.

The commemorative aspect of the Feast of Tabernacles is mentioned in that passage which harkens back to the Exodus 20:2 statement, just before the Ten Commandments was proclaimed on Mount Sinai (*Deuteronomy 16:12-15*).

6 - What about the Old Testament statutes? There were both statutes and ordinances. The statutes were given to strengthen the Ten Commandments. These include tithing, health principles, etc.

“In consequence of continual transgression, the moral law was repeated in awful grandeur from Sinai. Christ gave to Moses religious precepts which were to govern everyday life. These statutes were explicitly given to guard the Ten Commandments. They were not shadowy types to pass away with the death of Christ. They were to be binding upon men in every age as long as time should last. These commands were enforced by the power of the moral law, and they clearly definitely explained that law” — *Manuscript 12, 1894 (1 Bible Commentary, 1104)*.

7 - There remains one other interesting fact about the annual feast days. It has been clear that the facts about them fall into three definite and distinct categories:

(1) **The typical annual feasts:** These occurred at definite intervals throughout the year, beginning in the early spring and ending in the late fall.

(2) **The antitypical fulfillments:** These occurred in history at different times, in relation to their sequence in the typical year. Calvary; the spread

of Christianity begins; the call to the judgment begins; the judgment begins and ends; the marriage supper of the Lamb in heaven with His people.

(3) **The antitypical application to ourselves:** These are experiential fulfillments, which we have already discussed: conversion; evangelism; preparing for judgment; entering the judgment; rejoicing after the final harvest is completed.

Can you see it? A great truth is contained in the above patterns. Read again the second (the antitypical fulfillments). Here is this great truth:

The correct view of the sanctuary message is this: Christ died (*1-Passover*) and, at His resurrection, went to heaven to gain the assurance that His followers would be accepted and empowered to obey (*2-Wave Sheaf*). After His ascension, Christ began His ministry in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary and empowered His people to witness throughout the world (*3-Pentecost*). At a later time, amid what becomes a worldwide announcement (*4-Trumpets*), Christ began the investigative judgment (*5-Atonement*). Then probation, and with it the harvest, ends. Shortly afterward (*5-Tabernacles*) comes the rejoicing in heaven over the harvest past.

We have here a brief historical overview of Christian history, from Christ’s time on down to our own and beyond into eternity.

But the incorrect view of the sanctuary message and obedience by faith violates this divinely-given calendar of events.

The erroneous view would drastically change the order of events: (*1-Passover*); (*5-Atonement completed*); (*3-Pentecost*); (*6-Tabernacles*); (*only part of the wave sheaf* [obedience by faith], and no *Trumpets* [Three Angels’ call to the judgment]).

THE SPECIAL MESSAGE FOR THIS TIME

At this time in history, we should be focusing our attention on the great truths of historic Adventism. Those are the messages we should be giving to the world at this time. *The Bible Sabbath will be the great test, not the yearly feasts!*

“The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controverted. When the final test shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction will be drawn between those who serve God and those who serve Him not . . . While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God.” — *Great Controversy*, 605.

A world is waiting for the historic beliefs, which God has entrusted to us to share with them.

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