

Just want to thank you for an excellent book, and the spirit it was written in! I look forward to recommending it to others—whether new to the holy days or otherwise.

Vikki Moore (Canada)

Legalism! Fanaticism! Despite these cries by some sincere Christians, there is a growing number who are realising that the continuity of God's Festivals is determined not by their connection with the sacrificial system but by the scope of their typology. *Restoration of God's Festivals* reminds us that the Feasts, besides being commemorative, foreshadow the consummation of redemption to be accomplished by Christ at His second advent. Clearly they are relevant for us today. Recommended reading!

Glenn Coopman (Australia)

I am intrigued by the variance amongst feast-keepers, and, like you, believe that God will bring about unity founded on truth. In the meantime, we can prayerfully study and converse, in the right spirit, with one another, and learn from each other, as Christ's Spirit guides us into all truth.

via godsfestivals.com (Canada)

Restoration of God's Festivals

*An End Times
Shadow Fulfillment*

A fresh look at the Biblical Feasts and
their purpose for Christians today.

by
Tom Stapleton

Restorers' Press
Kelowna, BC

Note from the Author

All are invited to join the discussion on the restoration of God's Festivals, but please note that this book is primarily written for a Seventh-day Adventist audience. If the reader has any questions, please contact me via the information on the final page of the book.

After 20 years of study, I am amazed at how my understanding has developed on the subject of God's Festivals and their purpose in our faith today. I have no doubt it will continue to grow as long as my time lasts.

Keep in mind that the information presented here is a work in progress and is intended to stimulate the reader's interest and personal study on the subject. I have tried to "test all things" and "hold fast what is good." I would gladly receive any feedback you may have.

My sincere desire is that your understanding of God and His plan of salvation grows as you ponder the thoughts brought forward in this book.

All scripture references are from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted. Bible verses quoted appear in italics.

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Restoration of God's Festivals: An End Times Shadow Fulfillment

A fresh look at the Biblical Feasts and their purpose for Christians today.

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Book design and structural edit: Jill Veitch, webbpublishing.ca

3rd Edition, April 2012

ISBN: 978-0-9866782-0-2

Restorers' Press

Printed and bound in Canada.

A Special Dedication and Thank You

I would like to dedicate this book to my parents, Michael and Helen, who for many years were opponents to the truth of God's Word but before the passing of my father I witnessed a softening of his heart towards the teachings of the Bible. My mother and I often study and talk of God's Word. As I am writing this dedication my mother is waiting for her copy of this book.

I would like to thank all those who encouraged me to not only begin putting this work together but who also encouraged me to complete it. For all those encouragers, you will not know the work that has been accomplished because of your diligent encouragement until the kingdom comes. I would also like to give Jill Veitch, my editor, a special thank you. She has worked, and continues to work tirelessly on this work in progress.

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Guiding Us Into Truth

The unfolding of truth to successive generations was best understood by our Master. It was Jesus who said, “*I still have many things to say to you but you cannot bear them now. However when He, the Spirit of Truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth...*”¹

In His infinite wisdom, God has laid out the order of the unfolding of truth. It is my firm belief that today, as we are approaching the closing work of the reformation, God, in His timing, is calling upon us to restore His festivals.

Seventh-day Adventist founding member Ellen White² understood this concept very well when she stated in *The Ellen White 1888 Materials*:

“There are glorious truths to come before the people of God. Privileges and duties which they do not even suspect to be in the Bible will be laid open before the followers of Christ. As they follow on in the path of humble obedience, doing God’s will, they will know more and more of the oracles of God, and be

1 John 16: 12, 13

2 Ellen G. White is referenced throughout the book. Her writings are considered prophetic by the church and the author feels likewise. 9

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established in right doctrines.”³

As we will see in this study, scripture has foretold a restoration of God's calendar, complete with His festivals. But it is important for the Seventh-day Adventist community to note that Ellen White also supported this return to truth in her teachings:

“In the time of the end every divine institution is to be restored. The breach made in the law, at the time the Sabbath was changed by man, is to be repaired.”⁴

Stating “every divine institution” clearly opens up discussion of all of God's divine institutions. If the festivals were divine institutions, which she believed they were⁵; and if they did not meet their fulfillment in the cross, which I will show they did not; and if they were changed “at the time the Sabbath was changed by man”, which they were; then we can come to no other conclusion than that “in the time of the end” they will be restored.

Jesus did not come into the world to change the religion that He had given; He came to change the minds of those who had changed that religion.

*Do not think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.*⁶

3 Ellen White, *The Ellen White 1888 Materials*, p 114

4 Ellen White, *Prophets and Kings*, p 678

5 *Prophets and Kings*, p 101: “Many of the faithful, including a great number of the Levites, fled to Jerusalem, where they might worship in harmony with the divine requirements.” Ellen White proceeds to discuss Jeroboam's introduction of a feast in the eighth month, which was rebuked by God for “setting aside divinely appointed institutions”.

6 Matthew 5: 17, 18

Keeping the Feasts

Leviticus 23: 41, 44

⁴¹And ye shall keep it as a feast unto the LORD seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations: ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month.

⁴⁴And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the feasts of the LORD.

Understood correctly, God's calendar of festivals reveals the future to His followers and develops our faith in His provision for our salvation. There is plenty of reason for Seventh-day Adventists to celebrate Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles in addition to Sabbath. Each feast points to a different aspect of the plan of salvation, most of which have been foretold but not yet fulfilled. In fact the feasts teach the plan of salvation in its fullness. In observing the festivals our faith grows in the fulfillments that they portray.

Is it any wonder why the enemy of God has made them seem to be all about works and not faith?

The feasts teach the plan of salvation in its entirety. An understanding of the feasts brings tremendous meaning to the plan of salvation, revealing our Savior's work at every stage. They are a compacted prophecy of His ministry.

When the feasts are understood they clearly teach the good news of the gospel. God's festival calendar proves that Jesus was our Passover—our salvation: *Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us.*⁷

For Old Testament Israel, keeping the Passover had a threefold

7 1 Corinthians 5:7

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purpose. First, before they left Egypt for the Promised Land, the sacrificial Passover lamb was killed and its blood was streaked on the doorposts of their homes. The lamb was then eaten by the family and any that had joined them. This signified that each inhabitant of the home had accepted God's provision for salvation. God commanded them to annually commemorate this event by sacrificing a lamb then partaking of its flesh as did their ancestors. His purpose was that this would keep afresh in their minds the deliverance from their bondage in Egypt. By doing this each year they would never forget their deliverance as a nation. For ancient Israel, keeping the Passover as an annual festival commemorated their deliverance from Egypt.

Secondly, the Passover sacrificial lamb also pointed forward in faith to a time when the true Lamb of God (the Messiah) would be sacrificed.

Thirdly, it pointed forward to their deliverance/Passover from this world of bondage into the true Land of Freedom where the ultimate Passover will be fulfilled.

For the Christian church, celebrating Passover still has a threefold purpose. First, celebrating the Passover today connects us with the rich heritage of ancient Israel as our spiritual forefathers who were given the oracles of God.⁸

*And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.*⁹

Secondly, it is commemorative of our salvation in Jesus as we look back in faith to when "Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us."¹⁰

8 Romans 3:2 *What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were given the oracles of God.*

9 Galatians 3:16

10 1 Corinthians 5:7

Lastly, we too look forward as did Israel of old to being delivered from this world of bondage to the kingdom of the Messiah—the ultimate Passover that He is even now preparing for us. This is the true Land of Promise where bondage, sin, and sinners will be no more—a land where freedom reigns. The fulfillment of everything that the Passover teaches will take place at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb as recorded in Revelation 19:7-9. This will be the celebration of celebrations, when our Savior will say, “Come, My people, you have come out of great tribulation, and done My will; suffered for Me; come in to supper, for I will gird Myself, and serve you.”¹¹

By keeping the Passover today, we would demonstrate our faith in Jesus’ promise that He will eat it with us when “*it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.*”¹²

The Passover has always been commemorative of a past event and typical of a grand future event. In every age, the feasts have been, and are, a faith transaction on the part of the believer. They point backwards to deliverance from bondage and forward through a sequence of events that culminates in an entrance into the Land of Promise clear through to the Marriage supper of the Lamb, and the earth made new.¹³

One of God’s main purposes in the feasts is to develop our faith in His provision for our salvation. Is it any wonder why the enemy of God has made them seem to be all about works and not faith?

11 Ellen White, *Early Writings*, p 19

12 Luke 22:16

13 Revelation 19:7; 21:1-3

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The Story Behind the Book

During my twenty-plus years of study, I have shared my learning on the subject of God's Festivals through articles and small publications and in person at prayer groups and meetings. There has been positive and negative response, as expected, as well as call for further understanding. Over time, I felt the need to put an in-depth study together. My first goal was to be brief enough that most people would read it, while providing enough of my research to move a person to make an educated decision in favour of this new-but-old understanding of the festivals of God (which are also called 'the feasts'). It is my second goal that you, the reader, be prompted to further investigate the subject of the feasts and come to understand their validity and purpose for Christians today.

This book had humble beginnings, I started with a twelve page article that I copied and bound, then a thirty-four page booklet that was also frequently reproduced. The negative feedback I received through this growing process has been the most helpful to me; I have been able to deal with the objections I received. Now, after further feedback and revision, it has become the book you are holding in your hand.

There is much more to be said of the feasts than is contained herein—their prophetic nature, how they teach the plan of salvation, how to celebrate them, and so on. This is not an instruction manual, rather, a study for the purpose of opening the reader's mind to the idea that there is much to be gained by understanding and celebrating God's Festivals. The feasts are a faith transaction that God has entered into with us for the purpose of bringing us into a deeper relationship with Him and our fellow man. God's Festivals are appointed times, in addition to our existing weekly Sabbath, during which He has asked us to meet

and come into relationship with Him and with each other.

As I look back on my life I can see very clearly how the Lord has been leading me.

I was raised in a Roman Catholic home along with my six siblings (three girls and three boys). While there was no Bible presence in the home, a very small gospel seed was planted during my youth, gleaned from regular attendance at Sunday Mass and catechism. In theory, the fact that I was not brought up in a home where the truth of the Bible was taught and practiced should have been a disadvantage to me, however, this factor ultimately worked in my favour. When I found Bible truth at the age of twenty-five, it was instantly very precious to me.

My parents were extremely good parents. I was always fed and clothed (although not always in the latest fashions), and my needs as a child and youth were always met. In fact, I do not remember one incident in which my parents raised their voices to each other or even disagreed on anything. Later, when I became a husband and father, this feat came to mind: how they ever accomplished a peaceful home with seven children racing through it is simply amazing. I once asked my mother about it and her response was that she and my father had decided at the beginning of their relationship that they would never dispute anything in front of us kids. This, they lived out. What a tremendous blessing their commitment was to our family; our home was a very safe and secure place. This truth demonstrated two things to me: that God was working in their lives and, that there is incredible power in making decisions.

Interestingly, my parents quit taking us to church in my early teen years and, quite frankly, that was just fine with me. I would

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learn, much later, that the reason we discontinued going to church was that they had a disagreement with some of the Catholic teachings. I don't know all the details specifically, but they held true to their fundamental beliefs.

Their commitment also showed me that it was acceptable to challenge established belief systems.

My teen years were spent doing what most teens do, trying to have fun all the time; sports were a large part of my life. After I left home at 18, my eldest brother, Don, proposed that we partner together and do electrical contracting. This we did successfully. At the age of twenty-five, during some tight financial times and family circumstances, I became curious about what life was really all about. Don had also discovered an interest in spiritual matters. He was attending evangelistic meetings held by the Seventh-day Adventist church. The speaker? Henry Fyerabend.¹⁴ Within six months, my three brothers, as well as my wife of two months and youngest brother's fiancée, were all baptized.

Once we realized that the Catholic Church had strayed from the Word of God, we left the faith of our fathers and dug deeply into God's Word to know for ourselves what the Word actually says. The famine of God's Word in my life withered. Right from the beginning, I was taken to the study of God's Word, and from that point forward the Bible has been the guiding light in all aspects of my life.

My new found faith brought opposition—from family, friends, and strangers alike! Disapproval was coming in from all directions and, as I eventually figured out, this conflict was actually my greatest new-Christian blessing: I was forced to count the cost of being a Christian early in my experience.

¹⁴ Founder of "It Is Written Canada", a national television program.

Investigating the Truth

I am not sure where and when but I came across a phrase one day—truth suffers nothing from investigation. Over the years of studying the Bible this concept has taken shape in my mind. I will expand on it to try to give the full scope of its meaning. The closer one investigates something that is true, the more that truth is established. On the other hand, if there is something that one believes to be an established truth but is actually error, this too will be established upon close examination. Therefore, we should never discourage anyone from closely investigating even those things we believe to be established as truth. The fact that we believe something to be true does not make it true. Truth is truth whether we believe it or not; truth will stand all on its own whether we believe it or not. We need to understand that everything that we individually and collectively believe to be true will be brought under the microscope of those of the world to see if the things that are dear to us are true. Therefore, it behooves us to encourage anyone from among our ranks who chooses to closely examine our established truths with the goal of not only further verifying the subjects of their study as true but also to recognize if there are any flaws in our teachings. If there are, we can make the appropriate corrections.

As John F. Kennedy, former United States President, once stated, “An error is not a mistake unless you fail to correct it.” After twenty years of objectively studying the Festivals of God I am more convinced than ever that they are in need of being restored to God’s church of today. Why? I am thoroughly persuaded that an error was made when the celebration of the festivals ended in the post-Apostolic church—the Bible teaches this truth—and we must now correct this error.

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There are many examples of tests that came my way because of my new found faith but I will only give one, so that the reader will, to some extent, understand the price I had to pay for accepting the truth of God's Word.

One day, my father and I were at my brother's home, discussing the faith that Don and I had accepted. My parents were very upset and very angry about it; vexed may be a better word, but this is still putting it mildly. The conversation elevated to an uncomfortable level. My father began to tell us that in no uncertain terms, he and our mother no longer considered us to be their sons, and that we would be struck from their will. The position I took, in 1983, is: if following God and His Word means that it will bring separation from those I love, then this is the way it must be.

Please understand that I did not want to alienate myself from my parents, but I knew that truth, at times, produces this fruit. Our Savior warned us of this cost in Matthew 10:34, "*Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth, I did not come to bring peace but a sword.*" In this verse, I understand Jesus to be saying that truth, because it so frequently clashes with human thought and action, more often than not creates conflict.

My father's ultimatum affected me greatly, although I would not be intimidated by him. I had sufficient faith that my Heavenly Father would see me through, and He did. Twenty-two years later my father's heart softened and I believe he passed from this life in the hands of my Lord to await the resurrection. My mother has also come full circle. We often pray and study the Word together, praise God! "*Let those who fear the LORD now say, His mercy endures forever.*"¹⁵ Tears come to my eyes as I write these words; our God is faithful.

15 Psalms 118:4

I continued to study the Bible diligently. I was driven not only to know what it said, but also to understand it. This passion soon took me to the next level. Once one understands the Word of God, He calls us to apply it to our lives. This in turn enables us to experience the blessings that come from obeying the Word, which in turn, prompts us to share with others our experience with our God.

Understanding the Word and then applying it

One such example of this process in my life has to do with diet. As I began to understand through the Word of God that He had an interest in our physical wellbeing I became eager to follow what the Bible taught on healthful living. I decided to take God at His Word and to go back to His original plan concerning diet.

Well, twenty-seven years ago if you told someone you were a lacto-ovo vegetarian they would think you were strange, but if you told them that your diet did not consist of any animal products at all they likely would tell you that you would not survive. There were a number of people who tried to dissuade me (parents included) in my new lifestyle but I had developed enough faith in God by this time that I would take Him at His Word: “*Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!*”¹⁶ During this time, we had our first child and this also brought added controversy to the situation. These were sincere people but they did not understand what God’s Word taught about diet. They took it upon themselves to increase their opposition to our new way of life because they believed it was impossible to raise children on this type of diet. At this point I would like to say that I truly dug in on the study of diet. I searched the Bible thoroughly

16 Psalms 34:8

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to know and understand completely that I was on the right track. I also went to seminars on healthful living and read many scientific studies on vegetarianism.

One experience that really impressed me was when my wife and I attended prenatal classes and we were told that some of the meat choices in the American diet are not the best for us. I asked my general practitioner to do a complete physical on me; it had been a couple of years since I had become a vegan. As I discussed my approach with him, he proceeded to tell me that I had made a good choice as he too had been studying diet and how it affected our wellbeing. Over the next several years he took a special interest in me as he now had someone who had made this complete change available to monitor.

At the end of about eight years of going to him for check-ups and tests he told me that I would probably die of old age and that none of the common degenerative diseases would likely come my way. This experience strengthened my faith in God and His Word. This led me to want to share my newfound lifestyle and I became involved in teaching the art of healthful cooking in public meetings. This brought joy to me as I saw others accept into their lives the concepts that I had discovered and experienced. Some of those whom I taught about God's original plan for our diet accepted Christ into their lives from seeing that the truth about diet is actually taught in the Bible.

This process of finding truth in the bible, then applying it to my life, and then sharing it with others has become a way of life for me. I call this the abc's of real faith: a) finding truth, b) applying truth, c) sharing truth.

Along the journey, however, I ran into a few bumps on the road. Some of the things I had recently learned didn't seem to add up quite right. After much study, which has become the foundation of this book, I found that, as a church, we have not yet crossed every

‘t’ or dotted every ‘i’. This should not be a surprise as our search for truth will continue through end times.

Twenty years ago, through a challenge at our Bible study group I began to study the subject of the festivals. A young woman who attended our Bible study brought to our attention that we should be keeping the festivals and that Jesus’ death on the cross did not bring an end to the times that God appointed for meeting with His people in the same way that the Sabbath did not come to an end at the death of Jesus. I was not offended by this idea, rather, I took it as the challenge that it was. I decided that if this suggestion was true then the Bible would teach it.

The book you hold in your hands is the product of much prayer, study, reflection, experience, and experimentation with the feasts. I have put into practice the principle that I learned early on in my Christian experience: If the study of God’s Word brings you to a knowledge and understanding of something, ask God to help implement that teaching into your life. As I implemented God’s Festivals into my faith, I experienced their blessings, and there are many. One of my purposes in this book is to share these blessings with you.

Festivals to Restore

The Bible record indicates that right from the creation of this world God had a festival calendar¹⁷. This calendar was laid out with special times of celebration of the goodness of God and for God to be with His people in an intimate way. After the fall of man, additional meanings were attached to the feasts just as they were to the Sabbath.

This calendar God gave his people contained special Holy days. There were three annual festivals He called His people to come together for:

- 1) Spring: The Passover (includes the Feast of Unleavened Bread)
- 2) Summer: Pentecost
- 3) Fall: The Feast of Tabernacles

On the fourteenth day of Nisan—the first month of the Biblical year, Passover was celebrated. It marked the start of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which lasted from the fifteenth to the twenty-first day of Nisan.

Fifty days later, Pentecost was celebrated.

In the fall of the year, on the first day of the seventh Biblical month was the Feast of Trumpets. The Holiest day of the year followed ten days later: the Day of Atonement.

On the fifteenth day of that month, the Feast of Tabernacles began, lasting eight days, with the eighth day being called the Last Great Day of the feast and of the year.¹⁸ Mainstream Christianity, as well as Seventh-day Adventists, believe and teach that upon the crucifixion of Christ, these feasts were abolished and wiped out, being nailed to the cross. Their beliefs and teachings are based on the way they understand the terminology found in Eph 2:15 and Col 2:14. We will closely examine these two verses, as well as other texts, to rediscover the truth of God's message, and the exact meaning of the terminology found therein.

My years of study and prayer on this subject have led me to an interpretation and understanding of this issue that is in conflict with my church's position. I concluded that the feasts were not "nailed to the cross". In fact, they were discontinued by the late second century Roman Church, at the same time the Sabbath was changed.

The Bible records that the New Testament church continued to celebrate God's feasts through to the close of its record. Scripture contains no mention of discontinuing the practice of the Holy days, furthermore, in searching historical documents of post-apostolic times¹⁹ we find that God's feasts continued to be part of worship practice. Believers followed the example the Apostles left, as recorded in Scripture.

Our earliest record of when the celebration of God's Festivals ceased was when the Roman Church changed the Passover from

18 See Appendix I for a calendar of God's Festivals, page 173.

19 The post-apostolic period of Christ's church began in the second century C.E., following the death of the apostles.

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the fourteenth of the first Jewish month (Nisan) to the first Sunday following the full moon that occurs on or after the spring equinox, seemingly in honor of the resurrection of Jesus.

The Date of Easter and its Controversies

According to Encyclopedia Britannica

“Fixing the date on which the Resurrection of Jesus was to be observed and celebrated triggered a major controversy in early Christianity. An Eastern and a Western position can be distinguished in the dispute, which was not definitively resolved until the 8th century. In Asia Minor, Christians observed the day of the Crucifixion on the same day that Jews celebrated Passover—that is, on the 14th day of the first full moon of spring, Nisan 14 (see Jewish calendar²⁰). The Resurrection was observed two days later, on Nisan 16. Both of these events happened regardless of the day of the week. In the West, the Resurrection of Jesus was celebrated on the first day of the week, Sunday, the day that Jesus apparently rose from the dead. Consequently, Easter was always celebrated on the first Sunday after the 14th day of the month of Nisan.

“In the second century, there was a push by the Bishops in Rome to unite all Christians under one head. Increasingly, western churches opted for the Sunday celebration, and the Quartodecimans (“fourteenth day” proponents) remained a minority.

20 This calendar gives a basic idea of how the Biblical calendar blends with the Gregorian calendar. Visit colelchabad.org/calendar.

The Council of Nicaea in 325 decreed that Easter should be observed on the first Sunday following the first full moon after the spring equinox (March 21). Easter, therefore, can fall on any Sunday between March 22 and April 25.”²¹

This mandate is not found in the Scripture, which is to be the Christian’s only rule of faith.

Robert L. Odom, in his book *Sabbath and Sunday In Early Christianity* exposes the controversy between the Bishops of the western churches, in particular Rome, and the Bishops of Asia who were personally taught by the Apostles John and Philip. As the author exposes the conflict between the two groups, he brings into the picture the Passover feast (Pascha). Apparently this issue was central to the changing of the Sabbath to Sunday in that after Passover was changed to a specific date (Easter Sunday), the Roman church changed Sabbath to a Sunday celebration.

There was a desire in the western churches to have a separation between Judaism and Christianity. In his book, Odom brings to light things that have been hidden, for the most part, for nearly two millennia.

“Near the end of the second century Victor I, bishop of the church in Rome, demanded the excommunication of all Christians who refused to follow the Roman church in making Sunday the great day in the observance of the yearly ecclesiastical Pascha instead of the fourteenth day of the lunar month and whatever day of the week it should happen to be. This brought a storm of protest from the churches of the Province of Asia and their

21 eb.com. Encyclopedia Britannica: the-date-of-Easter-and-its-controversy, 2010

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Bishops. Polycrates, veteran bishop of the church in Ephesus who had “lived sixty-five years in the Lord,” was the spokesman for the Asian bishops. He wrote to Victor:

‘We observe the exact day: neither adding, nor taking away. For in Asia also great lights have fallen asleep, which shall rise again on the day of the Lord’s coming, when he shall come with glory from heaven, and shall seek out all the saints. Among these are Philip, one of the twelve apostles, who fell asleep in Hieropolis: and his two aged virgins daughters and another daughter, who lived in the Holy Spirit and now rests at Ephesus: and moreover, John, who was both a witness and a teacher, who reclined upon the bosom of the Lord, and, being a priest, wore the sacerdotal plate. He fell asleep at Ephesus. And Polycarp in Smyrna, who was a bishop and martyr... All these observed the fourteenth day of the Passover [Pascha] according to the Gospel, deviating in no respect, but following the rule of Faith.’”²²

A few centuries later, the Roman Catholic Church (which would later become the head of the Holy Roman Empire) sealed the fate of God’s Festivals when they replaced them with their own set of appointed observances.

22 *Sabbath and Sunday In Early Christianity*, Robert L. Odom, pp 118, 122

Why We Should Restore the Festivals

Christendom, for the most part, thinks that Jesus did away with God's calendar of feasts and festivals, but there is no biblical support for this action. Rather, it appears that the New Testament church continued to celebrate God's feasts through to the close of the Biblical record; scripture contains no mention of discontinuing their practice. Furthermore, in searching historical documents of post-apostolic times²³ we find that God's feasts continued to be part of worship practice, following the example the Apostles left as recorded in Scripture.

Ceasing the practice of the festivals was the first significant action that turned the church away from the religion of the Bible to the religion of fable and tradition. Changing worship from Sabbath to Sunday followed on the heels of this change. These two changes were the main indicators of the beginning of the dark ages, an era that was foretold in the Bible. The first major step in the reform of this dark age began with Martin Luther in the 1500's with his discovery that Jesus' sacrifice gives salvation to sinful man and not a church organization. This began a series of Biblical truth discoveries that continues to this day.

I believe it is safe to say that almost all religions, countries, people groups, and even cities have their festivals. This is because God planted in the heart of man a need to worship, celebrate, and have fellowship with loved ones and friends. For this reason God gave His people a worship schedule complete with appointed times of worship, celebration, and fellowship. His schedule was calculated to fill these divinely planted needs.

You may be asking yourself a couple of questions:

23 The period of Christ's church following the passing of his apostles, beginning in the second century C.E.

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What would celebrating God's Festivals do for me and my faith?

I can only tell you what celebrating them has done for me. I have come to a deeper and broader understanding of the Plan of Salvation and have a healthier appreciation of what God has done, is doing, and what He is going to do for me and for His people. I am experiencing a greater faith experience as I contemplate salvation history and as I look to the future festal fulfillments. I have also connected with the rich heritage of the Israel of old and have come to a fuller comprehension of the Spiritual Israel of today.

There are other blessings such as being able to spend more time with God, making new friends, understanding the books of Daniel and Revelation better, etc. However, to be completely honest, I must add that celebrating the festivals has not always been solely delightful. There have been attempts to try to turn these blessings into curses. How? By the negative way I have, at times, been treated because I have chosen to celebrate the feasts. I am glad to say that I have not been deterred by those who do not understand my experience with my God.

Second question: What would celebrating the feasts look like?

First of all, relax, there will be no sacrificing of animals "*For indeed Christ, our Passover has been sacrificed for us.*"²⁴ The sacrificial system came to an end when the ultimate sacrifice was made at Calvary. The sacrificial system met its fulfillment at the cross of Christ; therefore, we do not need to sacrifice animals anymore as what these sacrifices pointed forward to—the Lamb of God; died for the sins of the whole world. The feasts must be celebrated in a Christ centered non-legalistic way, with Christ as the fulfillment

24 1 Corinthians 5:7

of the symbols of the Old Testament sanctuary service.

Also, the promise of the ultimate fulfillments of God's festivals should be the focal point as we celebrate the feasts because we are still looking forward to their fulfillments before and in the kingdom of God. Jesus was clear on this point.

As an example of this let's look briefly at the Passover:

Luke 22: 15, 16

Then He said to them, "With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it [the Passover] until it [the Passover] is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

1 Cor 11:23-26

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

John 13:4, 5

He rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

Three things that need to be present at the Passover are: a contrite heart, the emblems of the life and death of our Savior in the bread and the pure fruit juice of the vine, and the foot washing service.

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Other things may be added such as a testimony time; this has been a blessing in the past. Scripture readings, such as from the Exodus from Egypt, the book of Revelation bringing to view the promises of the coming kingdom with all its blessings. The feasts should be a solemn time but also a time of celebration of what our Savior has done, is doing and what He is going to do for us in the near future.

The ultimate Passover meal will be celebrated in the kingdom of God when the redeemed of all ages will celebrate it with Him when He girds Himself again and serves the redeemed as He served the disciples at the last supper. In *Early Writings*, Ellen White comments on page 19,

“Come, My people, you have come out of great tribulation, and done My will; suffered for Me; come in to supper, for I will gird Myself, and serve you.” We shouted, “Alleluia! Glory!” and entered into the city. And I saw a table of pure silver; it was many miles in length, yet our eyes could extend over it. I saw the fruit of the tree of life, the manna, almonds, figs, pomegranates, grapes, and many other kinds of fruit.”

We wait, in expectation of the fulfillments of the festal calendar, celebrating them now, developing our faith in the promises they bring to the festal table.

It is not my purpose in this book to prescribe the method of your festal celebrations. There are now many books being written on ways to celebrate the festivals because many people are now coming to a knowledge of the feasts. The internet is also a good source for information. Also, if you know someone who has celebrated the feasts, ask them, I am sure that they would be willing to help get you started.

Foretold in the Bible

The very act of changing the festival calendar was foretold over 2550 years ago in the Book of Daniel. Daniel, in prophetic vision, sees a power symbolized as a little horn—a religious-political power. He tells us that this little horn power *shall intend to change TIMES and law*.²⁵ Many students of prophecy have suggested that this ‘little horn power’ could represent the Roman Catholic Church, headquartered at Vatican City and State.

You may recognize the following quote by Thomas Enright, who was a priest and the president of Redemptorist College (Roman Catholic) in Kansas City. It is often used in Seventh-day Adventist evangelistic meetings, however the last sentence (underlined) will be new to most readers as it is almost always left out.

“I have offered and still offer \$1000 to anyone who can prove to me from the Bible alone that I am bound, under grievous sin, to keep Sunday holy. It was the Catholic Church which made the law obliging us to keep Sunday holy. The Church made this law long after the Bible was written. Hence said law is not in the Bible. Christ, our Lord, empowered his church to make laws binding in conscience. He

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said to his apostles and their lawful successors in the priesthood, 'Whatever you shall bind on earth shall be binding in heaven'.²⁶ The Catholic Church abolished not only the Sabbath, but all the other Jewish festivals.²⁷

In the past we have interpreted Daniel 7:25 "to change times and law" as referring to the Sabbath only, but by using lexicons and concordances we can derive a better understanding of the text. This is why several newer translations clearly state that the festivals are included in the "times" that were changed.

Daniel 7:25 in the Amplified Bible reads:

And he shall speak words against the Most High [God] and shall wear out the saints of the Most High and think to change the time [of sacred feasts and Holy Days] and the law.

Other translations say:

NRSV: "attempt to change the sacred seasons and the law."

NLT: "try to change their sacred festivals and laws."

GNT: "try to change their religious laws and festivals."

TNIV: "try to change the set times and the laws."

HCSB: "intend to change religious festivals and laws."

Daniel 7 was originally written in Chaldee (Aramaic) and the word "times", which is numbered H2166 in *Strong's Concordance*²⁸ is

26 Matthew 16:19; 18:17 and Luke 16:19

27 T. Enright CSSR, St. Alphonsus (Rock) Church, St. Louis, June 1905

28 *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* is a cross-reference of every word in the King James Version of the Bible back to its original text. Each original-language word is given an entry number (ie: H2166), which allows the user of the concordance to look up the meaning of the original word, thereby showing how it was translated into the English word in the KJV Bible.

a translation from the Aramaic word “zeman”, which can translate to the Hebrew word “moed” (appointed time) which is translated to “feast” in English. Therefore Daniel 7:25 is speaking of the little horn changing the set “times” of the law, which includes the feasts of the Lord.

H2166: זמן; zeman; zem-awn'; (Chaldee); from
“Times” H2165; the same as H2165: - season, time.

H2165: זמן; zeman; zem-awn'; from H2163; an
appointed occasion - season, time.

H2163: זמן; zaman; zaw-man'; A primitive root; to
fix (a time): - appoint.

H4150: מועד מועד מועד ; mo'ed mo'ed mo'adah
mo-ade', mo-ade', mo-aw-daw'
[Hebrew] From H3259; properly an
appointment, that is, a fixed time or
season; specifically a festival;
conventionally a year; by implication,
an assembly (as convened for a definite
purpose); technically the congregation;
by extension, the place of meeting; also a
signal (as appointed beforehand): -
appointed (sign, time), (place of, solemn)
assembly, congregation, (set, solemn)
feast, (appointed, due) season, solemn
(-ity), synagogue, (set) time (appointed).

Notice that Daniel says the little horn “thinks” or “attempts” or “tries” to change the time of sacred feasts and Holy Days. The times of the feasts would not actually be changed if the little horn was

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only attempting to change them.

This disregard and substitution of God's direct command parallels the experience of Cain; there was a form of worship but it was not as God had required.²⁹ People in every age have followed the path of Cain. "*These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.*"³⁰ People do tend to get angry when it is pointed out that the way they worship is not according to the divine plan as laid out in Scripture.

Foretelling the Restoration of the Festivals

Because God knew in advance, and therefore warned us that His festivals would be changed He has also foretold of their restoration at the end of time. There is a statement Ellen White penned in *Prophets and Kings* that allows that possibly, and it could be that even *she* did not comprehend the extent to which that restoration would reach, "In the time of the end every divine institution is to be restored. The breach made in the law, at the time the Sabbath was changed by man, is to be repaired."³¹ There is a reformation principle put forward in this statement that has rung true down through the ages: what was lost will be found. Ellen White understood this principle very well.

I realize that she is referring primarily to the Sabbath, but stating "every divine institution" clearly opens the discussion to include exactly what she states—every divine institution.

If the festivals were divine institutions, which they were, and if

29 Genesis 4:3-7. Verse 5 says, "*But He did not respect Cain and his offering and Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.*"

30 Matthew 15: 8, 9

31 Ellen White, *Prophets and Kings*, p 678

they did not meet their fulfillment at the cross, which they did not, and if they were changed “at the time the Sabbath was changed by man,” which they were, then we can come to no other conclusion that “in the time of the end” they will be restored. The feasts not only *were* divine institutions, they *are* divine institutions.

The context of the statement in *Prophets and Kings* on page 101 that calls the feasts “divinely appointed institutions” should not go without comment. On page 99, White continues, “Jeroboam, the former servant of Solomon” was placed “on the throne by the ten tribes of Israel who had rebelled against the house of David.” Jeroboam was put “in a position to bring about wise reforms in both civil and religious affairs... Jeroboam’s greatest fear was that at some future time the hearts of his subjects might be won over by the ruler occupying the throne of David” in Jerusalem. He devised a plan to retain control over his subjects and worship was at the foundation of that plan. He instituted “*a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast [of Tabernacles] that is in Judah...*”³² This gave the people in the northern kingdom a counterfeit worship system. By doing this he believed he would retain control over his subjects because they would not feel the necessity of going to Jerusalem to worship at the divinely appointed feasts. This maneuver came at a price; judgment followed as a result.

This experience of changing the divine appointments that God had ordained for His people almost perfectly parallels what the second century Roman Church did to gain complete control over its subjects. At the time the feasts were changed by the Roman church, the Sabbath was also changed. This culminated in a blending of two belief systems; paganism and Christianity.

Rome was anti-Jewish. Therefore purging the ‘Jewishness’ from the new Christian religion seemed necessary in order to convert the

32 1 Kings 12:32

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pagans. The Romans did not understand the rich Jewish heritage that bound true Christianity to Judaism.

Dropping the Jewishness of Christianity seemed a natural thing to do. Blending paganism and Christianity provided a worship system that could control the masses, both Christian and pagan—albeit counterfeit. As we reflect on Ancient Israel's history we should learn from them that blending true and false religion never turned into anything good.

Counterfeit Festivals

As we have seen, Leviticus 23 lists the appointed times of the LORD including the Sabbath.³³

When God's two great Festivals—Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles—are compared with the Catholic Church's two great festivals—Easter and Christmas—it can be clearly seen that Satan has carefully and cunningly counterfeited God's festival calendar just as he did the Sabbath. Why would he do this? I would like to suggest five primary reasons:

1. To divert the mind of the worshiper from the true God.
2. To counterfeit the God-given worship system for the purpose of supplying the divinely planted need for us humans to worship and return thanks to our Maker.
3. To counterfeit the system that God instituted to supply the human need for times of fellowship and celebration with God, family and other believers.
4. So that we would not understand the plan of salvation as it is revealed in the feasts, especially the closing scenes

33 See Appendix 3 for the complete text of Leviticus 23, page 183.

such as the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost), the judgment (Feast of Trumpets), the close of judgment (Day of Atonement) and the Feast of Tabernacles, all of which point forward to God dwelling with man. These future events are made crystal clear in these festivals. The enemy of souls does not want us to understand these things. This is why God in His Word warned us of the coming change of the festival calendar.

5. An understanding of the festivals also helps us to understand the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation; and because the prophecies of these two books expose the plans of Satan, he does not want us to connect the feasts to the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation.

The world is bankrupt of these concepts; the restoration of the feasts would help to bring these truths into the minds of people.

Shadows of Things to Come

When I began to search the New Testament for a direct command to observe the feasts, I could not find one until 1 Corinthians 5:7-8 jumped out at me: *...Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast...* The beauty of the call to action in this verse is that it is not a command but an invitation to celebrate the feast.

As Seventh-day Adventist evangelists are fond of saying, “there is no text in the New Testament that abolishes the Sabbath—therefore, it still stands.” By the same reasoning, the lack of a text clearly abolishing the feasts is good evidence of their continuance.

If we will open our eyes we would see that restoration is happening everywhere. The internet has sites popping up almost daily explaining this growing movement. There are pockets of Christians, including Seventh-day Adventists, independently discovering and proclaiming the truth of the restoration of God’s Festivals from the four corners of the earth. I am continually meeting people from all denominations that are coming to a true knowledge of the Sabbath and the festivals. They are coming out of their respective churches with basically nowhere to go.

The majority of those who are accepting this new teaching are for the most part taking the name Messianic. However, because

of the newness of this movement, unity between these groups is still developing. This is where I believe the Seventh-day Adventist church could play a major role. If the church would open its door to this broad group of people, great steps could be made toward restoring “every divine institution”.

I have become convinced that God’s Festivals could and should play a role in God’s end time church. The celebration of the feasts is central to the restoration of ‘all things’ that Jesus talked about when He said “*Elijah truly is coming first and WILL RESTORE ALL THINGS.*”³⁴

You are about to embark on a short journey that will take you into the heart of Paul’s epistle to the Colossian church, through the Old and the New Testament, where we will visit the great revivals of the past, and we will see how the festivals were central to these revivals. We will go clear back to the creation account and discover that right from creation God instituted a calendar complete with appointed times of celebration. We will also tour with John on the Isle of Patmos where he saw the ultimate fulfillments of the festival calendar. Along the way we will spend some time with the writings of Ellen White to learn what she had to say on the subject.

Bible Typology

Bible typology is the study of prophetic symbols in the bible. More specifically, it is the study of a person, thing or event in the Old Testament which foreshadows a person, thing or event in the New Testament and beyond. The Old Testament object or person

34 Matthew 17:11 In this verse, Jesus is referring to the prophecy of Malachi (Malachi 4:4) where Malachi records the words of the Lord in which He commands His last day church to “*remember the law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments*”.

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is called the 'type' (thus typology). The New Testament object or person that the type symbolizes is called the 'antitype'.³⁵ The type is the symbol (the shadow) of things to come (the antitype, the future person or thing).

Think of a telephone pole that is illuminated from one side. It casts a long shadow along the ground, resembling the pole. The shadow is not actually the pole, but it is like the pole. We could say the shadow is typical of the pole: a person can tell to some degree what the pole is like by the shadow that it casts.

If you were placed at the tip of the shadow and your goal was to get to the pole, you would walk along the shadow until the shadow meets the pole. When this reality is met, the shadow (the thing that is typical of the actual pole) becomes immaterial and obsolete.

In the Old Testament God gave Moses plans—blue prints if you will, to build a sanctuary which was to be a place of meeting, worship, and sacrifice. These plans for the physical sanctuary included five main categories of shadows/types with which God provided laws (instruction) to the people. They were:

1. The sanctuary proper: the actual building.
2. The articles of furniture contained in the sanctuary.
3. The personnel who ministered in the sanctuary: the priesthood and the high priest.
4. The sacrificial system which included animal and food offerings.
5. The festivals at their appointed times.

35 See Romans 5:14; 1 Corinthians 10:6, 11; Hebrews 8:5; 9:24; 1 Peter 3:21

Let us look at these individually.

1. *The Sanctuary Proper: and consequence for refusing to accept Jesus*

The book of Hebrews refers to this sanctuary as being “symbolic (typical) for the present time... imposed until the times of reformation”³⁶ had come to meet their fulfillment. This sanctuary was a shadow “of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man...”³⁷ This sanctuary was part of “the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, ‘See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain’.”³⁸

The sanctuary was a house that contained many teaching tools used by God to help us understand the actual heavenly sanctuary and the plan of salvation. When the shadow/type (i.e. the ritual sacrifice of a lamb during Passover to atone for sins), met the reality/antitype at the cross (i.e. the sacrifice of Jesus, which took away the sins of all man), the ritual Passover sacrificial services at the earthly temple became obsolete. However, the Jewish leaders continued the sacrificial rituals at the temple because they would not recognize the fulfillment of the sacrificial system (they refused to accept Jesus as the antitype—Lamb of God) which fulfilled the type (the old practice of animal sacrifice). God allowed the Romans to destroy the temple as a result. The earthly temple need not have been destroyed because its original purpose was that it be a house of prayer for all nations.³⁹ The Jewish nation was promised that their temple would stand forever if they were

36 Hebrews 9: 9, 10

37 Hebrews 8:2

38 Hebrews 8:5

39 See Isaiah 56:7; Mark 11:17

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steadfast in following God.⁴⁰

The Son of Man wept on the triumphal entry into Jerusalem that final week before the fateful Passover. Crowds had gathered to welcome the Son of David as He entered through the gates of the city. As the palm branches swept victory into the air, defeat flashed through His mind. When Jesus met the resistance of the Jewish leaders, reality of the destruction of the nation of Israel and of the temple was impressed upon His mind.

Jesus said, *"If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in from every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone upon another because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you".*⁴¹ And later that same week, Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, *"Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."*⁴²

2. The Furniture of the Sanctuary

The different furniture pieces in the sanctuary were also shadows/types. The furniture was to be made exactly as God specified to Moses.⁴³ One example of this was the seven-lamped candlestick called the Menorah. It had seven branches on it, each containing a lamp in which oil was poured.⁴⁴

40 See 1 Kings 9:4-9

41 Luke 19:41-44

42 Matthew 24:1, 2

43 See Exodus 25: 8, 9

44 See Exodus 25:31-40

The number seven appears several times in Scripture as the number of completeness (seven days of the creation week, seven trumpets, the seven last plagues of Revelation, etc.) These seven lamps were to remain lit in the sanctuary at all times. This candlestick was a shadow/type of the Reality/Antitype who was to come. *“That was the true [and complete] Light which gives light to every man who comes into the world.”*⁴⁵ When Jesus, “the Light of the world” came, He was the fulfillment or antitype of the lighted candlestick. The teaching tool was no longer necessary for the Light of the world had come.

3. *The personnel of the Sanctuary*

The priesthood and, specifically, the high priest were also shadows/types of the true Priest/High Priest who was to come. Jesus was the reality/fulfillment of these shadow types. He would minister in *“the true tabernacle which the Lord erected and not man.”*⁴⁶ As we follow the priests in the Old Testament system of shadows and types, they were to lead us to Christ, our true High Priest. *“But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.”*⁴⁷

Concerning this point, it is written in the book of Hebrews that there needed to be a change in the law. *“For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.”*⁴⁸ Here again, the Jewish leaders would not recognize this change because “Caiaphas [the high priest] had regarded Jesus as his rival.”⁴⁹

45 John 1:9

46 Hebrews 8:2

47 Hebrews 9:11

48 Hebrews 7:12

49 Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p 704

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It should be noted that the regular priesthood was not technically done away with as the New Testament believers replaced the Jewish priests: “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.”⁵⁰ New Testament believers now became the ministers of the plan of salvation and were to spread the Word to the world.

*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.*⁵¹

4. *The sacrificial system which included animal and food offerings.*

The sacrificial system was a shadow/type of the True Sacrifice that was to come. The simplest example of this is the daily sacrificial lamb offering. The Jews were instructed by God through Moses to offer a lamb in the morning (9:00 am) and one in the evening (3:00 pm). We know that Jesus was “...the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world.”⁵²

It is interesting that the Gospel of Mark records the exact time of Jesus being nailed to the cross (9:00 am). I believe the reason for this is to show that Jesus was the fulfillment of this daily

⁵⁰ 1 Peter 2:9, 10

⁵¹ Matthew 28: 19, 20

⁵² John 1:29

offering of the lamb. “Now it was the third hour⁵³ and they crucified Him... And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” which is translated, “My God, My God, Why Have You Forsaken Me? ...And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last.”⁵⁴

Without question, Jesus was the fulfillment of the sacrificial system. The book of Hebrews is very clear that the blood of bulls, lambs, goats etc. could never take away the sins of anyone.⁵⁵ The purpose of these shadow sacrifices was to lead us to the reality in the sacrifice of the Son of God. “For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.”⁵⁶ The animal sacrificial system met its fulfillment and ended the moment Jesus proclaimed, “Father, into your hands I commend My spirit.”⁵⁷

5. *The festivals at their appointed times.*

The final shadows/types of the Old Testament system that God gave to Moses were the festivals. The festivals are typical of future ultimate fulfillments, not only as to the events, but also the timing of those events.

The key to understanding these final shadows/types is to realize that the shadows/types must meet their reality/antitype before they can pass away. I will show you that God’s Festivals are shadows of realities that clearly have not yet met their fulfillment.

In Colossians 2:17 (which we will study in full, later in the book)

53 In Jewish reckoning the day started at 6:00 am, therefore 9:00 am would be deemed as the third hour and 3:00 pm would be considered the ninth hour. These were the times of the morning and evening sacrifices.

54 Mark 15:25, 34-38

55 See Hebrews 10:4

56 Hebrews 10:14

57 Luke 23:46

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Paul clearly states that the festivals, New Moons and Sabbath “*are shadows of things to come.*” Paul penned this text in approximately 62 CE, therefore these three shadows—festivals, New Moons and Sabbath—were not fulfilled at the time of Jesus’ death; they have not met their anti-type and they still point forward to fulfillments to come.

God’s Festivals, therefore, were not nailed to the cross.

The Festivals

Let us look at each of the feasts in greater detail to determine their future fulfillments:

- The Passover
- The Feast of Unleavened Bread
- First Fruits
- Pentecost
- The Feast of Trumpets
- The Day of Atonement
- The Feast of Tabernacles

Included in these festivals there are a total of seven additional holy days in addition to the weekly Sabbath.

The Passover

We have learned that shadows become fulfilled (they pass away) when they collide with their reality. For example, the act of sacrificing animals (the Passover lamb) ended when “*Christ our Passover, was sacrificed for us*”⁵⁸ at Calvary. Shadow/type—the act of

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sacrificing a lamb, met reality/anti-type—the death of Christ at Calvary, and thus the shadow was no longer required.

*Then He said to them, 'With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.'*⁵⁹

The ultimate Passover will be fulfilled when the people of God pass over from this world to the Heavenly Canaan to celebrate the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

The word “it” in the verse above, refers to the Passover. According to Jesus, the Passover will be “*fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.*” This indicates that not all concerning the Passover has been fulfilled.

The Lord's Passover is all about being redeemed from the land of slavery and entering into the Land of Promise. In all ages, this has been and will be accomplished through the Lamb of God.

The Passover not only commemorates His death, but also typifies a grand future event. Let's look at this point closely. When the disciples kept that last Passover with Jesus, they were marking the Passover meal kept by ancient Israel before their departure from Egypt enroute to the Promised Land.

The last Passover meal that Jesus shared with His disciples was typical of a future grand event: the Passover fulfillment that the church in all ages has waited for, when we shall have passed-over from this land of bondage to the Land of Freedom, culminating in the celebration of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (the Ultimate Passover meal). The Passover meal is kept in remembrance that “*Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us*”⁶⁰, but at the same time, it is also typical of a future event: the Grand Passover that the church

⁵⁹ Luke 22:15, 16

⁶⁰ 1 Corinthians 5:7

in all ages has waited for.

Celebrating the Passover today would not only be commemorative but also typical of that grand future event. According to Jesus, all past Passovers have pointed to a future fulfillment: “I will no longer eat of it [the Passover] until it [the Passover] is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.”⁶¹ The last Passover that Jesus ate with His disciples was typical of the future fulfillment that, according to His Word, would be “fulfilled in the Kingdom of God”.

We therefore cannot say that the Passover was fulfilled at the cross. Our provision to pass over has been made, but the passing over to the Land of Promise has not yet been accomplished.

The Ultimate Sacrifice and the Plan of Salvation

On that last Passover Jesus spent with His disciples, the focal point of the plan of salvation was revealed. His and His Father’s love for them would be fully manifest.

God’s love for His creation was brought into question by His adversary—the Devil. The event that was about to happen (His sacrifice) would answer this question for all time: God is Love. The love of God was fully revealed on that Passover. Can there be any doubt about why Jesus desired to eat that Passover with them? He would reveal His love for them in its totality on that Passover. He would give Himself completely to His bride that night. The last Passover He shared with His disciples was, in shadow/type, the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

But Jesus answered them, saying, “*The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.*”⁶² “*Now before the feast of the Passover, when*

61 Luke 22:16

62 John 12:23

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Jesus knew that His hour had come that he should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world. He loved them to the end.”⁶³ When we read texts such as these we do not think in terms of a bigger picture. Jesus specifically says “*The hour had come...*” I believe this to be a specific reference to a clock that is larger than a twenty-four hour device. I believe it is a reference to a heavenly clock that has divine appointments built into it. This *hour that had come* that Jesus was speaking of is the time of the Passover sacrifice—His death, and the feast of First Fruits—His resurrection and accession to heaven. In God’s calendar of events (the festal calendar), the time had come for yet another event.

When we, as Christians, keep the Passover today, it not only commemorates Christ’s sacrifice for us, but is also typical; it points to the time when Jesus will stand in the heavenly kingdom, in front of the whole universe, and receive His Bride (The Church) from the Father’s hand. This will be followed by the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Jesus will again gird Himself, as He did with the disciples at His last supper, and serve the redeemed of all ages in the Kingdom of God.⁶⁴

This fulfillment event will be the Passover of Passovers; when the redeemed of all ages will have passed over from the land of bondage to the Land of Freedom. What a celebration that will be!

Therefore when we accept Christ as our Passover Lamb, we become qualified to partake of the ultimate future Passover meal in the Kingdom of God.

Teaching the Plan of Salvation

63 John 13:1

64 Ellen White, *Early Writings*, p 19. See Daniel 7:13, 14; Revelation 19:9

The fall festivals are as significant as Passover. They point to incredibly important events that are just ahead of us and we must understand these things to come.

With an understanding of the importance of festival types and their ultimate fulfillments (anti-types), it should be no surprise to know that the enemy of God has an unrelenting hatred for God's festival calendar.

Why? Because God's Festivals give us plenty of reasons to celebrate Him and they also reveal the future to us. Scripture foretold the change of God's calendar.⁶⁵ And for good reason—if you were the enemy of God, you would want to take the joy of the festival celebrations away from those who will experience their fulfillments.

If you were the enemy of God, wouldn't you try to hide the future from those who will go through it?

Furthermore, the feasts are a faith experience God enters into with His people. If you were the enemy of God wouldn't you try to take away everything that would build the faith of God's people?

Christendom, for the most part, thinks that Jesus did away with God's festival calendar, but this is not so.

Each festival points to different future events of the plan of salvation, most of which have not yet been fulfilled. In fact, the feasts teach the plan of salvation in its fullness.

More study needs to be done as to the exact fulfillments of the festival calendar. It is in this area that my study is still developing. Listed below are some very plausible fulfillments of the remaining festivals.

65 See Daniel 7:25

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The Feast of Unleavened Bread

The Feast of Unleavened Bread is symbolic of the life of Christ recreated in the newly born Christian who has accepted Christ as their Passover sacrifice. Eating of the unleavened bread is symbolic of the believer's new life in Christ as they are partaking of the Bread of Life. It also points forward to being completely free from the presence of sin in and around our lives, hence the search to rid the house of all leaven.⁶⁶

As we keep this feast it assures us of the promise that we can be *"confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ; He who has begun a good work will finish it."*⁶⁷ *"Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."*⁶⁸

Pentecost

Pentecost is typical of the outpouring of the latter rain in the last days. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 is a shadow of what God will do for His people in the last days.

Acts 2:17, 18

And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and

66 See Exodus 12:15; 13:17

67 Philippians 1:6

68 1 Corinthians 5:7, 8

*on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days;
and they shall prophesy.*

The day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts 2 is but a shadow of what God has promised for those faithful ones living in the “last days”. If God waited until Pentecost to pour out the early rain, is it not logical to conclude that He would wait until a Pentecost to pour out the latter rain on His waiting church at the end of time?⁶⁹ Pentecost in Acts 2 is not only typical in event but also in time.

Acts 2: 1, 38, 47

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ...Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost... Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

The Feast of Trumpets

The Feast of Trumpets signals the beginning of judgment of the living. This feast meets its fulfillment in Revelation 9-11 in the Seven Trumpets. The seventh and last trumpet signals the return of Jesus. “*Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!’*”⁷⁰

It should be noted that the Feast of Trumpets is on the first day

69 The early rain and the latter rain are symbolic references to the two significant appointed times in which God would pour out His Spirit on all Flesh. See Joel 2:23; 28, 29; Acts 2:16-18.

70 Revelation 11:15

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of the seventh month of the Biblical year and is the seventh trumpet of the year. Six trumpets have preceded this feast, one on the new moon (the first day of the Biblical month) of each preceding month starting at the beginning of the year. These cycles must be considered as we look for the fulfillments of the festival calendar in the Seven Trumpets of the Book of Revelation.

The Day of Atonement

The Day of Atonement did not meet its fulfillment at the cross. This one-day event is the most solemn feast in the year. It represents the final Day of Judgment for Israel. The fulfillment of this festival at the time of the end is the closing of judgment in heaven.⁷¹ Seventh-day Adventists should know that the events foreshadowed in this day are almost all still future.

The Feast of Tabernacles

Says Ellen White in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 541:

“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 be destroyed.”⁷²

⁷¹ See Revelation 15:1-8

⁷² See also Matthew 13:30 and Revelation 14:14-20

The events that the Feast of Tabernacles is pointing forward to are the closing scenes of this world when the opening of judgment—Feast of Trumpets and the close of judgment—the Day of Atonement will have been completed. This is a time of rejoicing for God's people because the final cleansing of their sins is complete. They are now ready to be gathered to go home to the kingdom of God.

Today, when we celebrate the richness of the feasts we partake of a banqueting table that is weighed down with the life-giving promises of the gospel. The Festivals are a tool in the hands of God that build our faith in what God has spoken in His Word. By faith, the Festivals bring eternity to view in the here and now.

Fulfilling the New Moons and Sabbath

Isaiah 66:23

‘For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me,’ says the LORD, ‘So shall your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one New Moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, all flesh come to worship before me, says the LORD.’

New Moons

The New Moons mark the beginning of each Biblical month, and set the dates for the festivals. The shadow and fulfillment of the new moons appears from three texts: Isaiah 66:23, Ezekiel 47:12 and Revelation 21:4.

The words “new moon” in the Isaiah text above is the same Hebrew word “Chodesh” as is used for the word “month” in the following reference of Ezekiel 47:12, and in all of the Old Testament. In most cases wherever the word “month” is used in the Old Testament, “new moon” is an equally valid translation. It seems very plausible when reviewing Ezekial 47:12 and Revelation 22:2 that the new moon will be a time of meeting in the new earth, so why not celebrate now.

Ezekiel 47:12

Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all kinds of trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month [new moon], because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine.

Ezekiel 47:12 is a beautiful picture of the source of all life; the river of life flowing from the throne of God, supplying nutrients for the tree of life to provide food and healing so that we can live in perfect health forever in a kingdom where there is nothing but peace and harmony.

Revelation 21:4

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.

Eternally young! Can one fully comprehend this truth? Celebrating the new moons brings this reality to us in faith as we rejoice in the future fulfillment of the promise. I believe that there will be a different fruit on the tree of life every new moon; there will be a fresh revelation every new moon throughout eternity that God is the Author and Source of all life and all that we enjoy. Why not celebrate the new moons in faith now, as we look forward to partaking of the tree of life in the kingdom of God?

If you have a cross reference Bible you should notice that Ezekiel 47:12 is linked to Revelation 22:2. These texts indicate that we will not only meet at the time of the new moon but that we will have fresh fruit to partake of from the Tree of Life.

Revelation 22:2

And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the

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middle of the street, on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

It was access to the tree of life that was denied to Adam and Eve because they listened to Satan who manifested himself in the form of a serpent in the Garden of Eden. Celebrating the New Moons brings reality to the promise of the restoration of the tree of life for all the redeemed to enjoy its eternal life-giving fruit.⁷³ If I was the enemy of God it would be my purpose to obliterate everything that would point toward this promise. Doing away with the new moon celebration would be a calculated move toward this end.

The New Moons will be the days on which we come to eat of the tree of life. Therefore, what the New Moon celebration points forward to was not fulfilled at the cross. Our provision to partake of the tree of life was made and fulfilled at the cross in the Lamb of God but what the New Moon celebration typifies in the promise of partaking of the tree of life in the kingdom to come at the New Moon has yet to happen. The promise in the New Moon celebration has not been realized; as we celebrate it today by faith it brings reality to the promise therein. The enemy of all truth has a hatred beyond measure for these promises that are contained in the appointed times, this is why he has had it in mind to change times and law.⁷⁴ The New Moon celebration is truly a “*shadow of things to come*”.⁷⁵

73 See Revelation 22:14

74 See Daniel 7:25

75 Colossians 2:17

The Sabbath

The Sabbath is also a shadow. The word “Sabbath” means “cessation”; the Sabbath, by definition, is a stop in time. It is a time out, if you will. God, every week, stops everything He is doing to meet with His creation. It is our weekly stop-everything-that-we-are-doing meeting with our God.

The Sabbath not only commemorates our creation but also our re-creation, as we rest in Him on the Sabbath. It also points forward to the glorious Seventh-day Sabbath rest in the new earth.

One thing is for sure; the rest we enjoy during the Sabbath hours now is truly only a shadow of the rest we will enjoy during the Sabbath on the new earth. At this time, we meet with Him in a spiritual sense; in the future, we will meet with Him face to face.

Furthermore, the Sabbath is not only a memorial of creation, but is also a shadow/type. The Sabbath points forward to the time when we will celebrate the re-creation of our planet; a time when God “will make all things new”.⁷⁶ We celebrate the Sabbath in faith looking forward to when He will fulfill His promise and “make all things new”.

In the book of Genesis God tells us that the Sabbath was the last gift to man in giving us this planet.⁷⁷ Since that time the earth has come under the curse of sin. This will be fully realized in the time of the end.⁷⁸ God has promised that he will recreate the heavens and the earth.⁷⁹ It would seem logical that He will complete the re-creation of our heavens and earth with the Sabbath as He did in the beginning. The fact that God created this earth and left the

⁷⁶ Revelation 21:5

⁷⁷ See Genesis 2:1-3

⁷⁸ See Isaiah 24:6

⁷⁹ See Revelation 21:1

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Sabbath as a memorial of creation gives us the assurance that He will *re-create* this earth and leave the Sabbath as a memorial of His *re-creation*.

An understanding of the typology of the New Moons and the Sabbath gives these texts a whole new meaning. *“For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me,’ says the Lord, so shall your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass That from one New Moon to another, And from one Sabbath to another, All flesh shall come to worship before Me,’ says the Lord.”*⁸⁰

When one looks at the New Moon and the Sabbath celebrations from this angle they are surely a “shadow of things to come”.

As we remember how the Lord has led in the past, it gives us great faith and courage for the future.

80 Isaiah 66: 22, 23

More than Just Sacrifice

Were the feasts instituted solely for the purpose of sacrificing? If this were so, then they should definitely not be kept today.

It is generally taught in Christendom that because there were animal sacrifices performed on the feasts they were an inseparable part of the ceremonial/sacrificial laws⁸¹ and therefore, to celebrate the feasts would suggest that we should be sacrificing again. It is true that on feast days prior to the death of Christ there were services and sacrifices that were ceremonial in type.

Please understand that the appointments God set forth in His law still stand; it was the animal sacrifices that foreshadowed the sacrifice of the Son of God for sin that has been fulfilled, not the appointed times themselves.

Some believers feel that because the feasts contained additional sacrifices other than that of the regular daily morning and evening sacrifice, they were done away with, along with the sacrifices.

From Numbers 28:9-10 we can see there were additional ceremonial services, including additional sacrifices, done on the

81 See Numbers 28, 29

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seventh-day Sabbath.⁸² Does this negate the Sabbath?

How about the regular daily morning and evening sacrifices?⁸³ Should we discontinue morning and evening worship because they used to sacrifice in the morning and evening as part of a fulfilled worship experience?

We no longer sacrifice because the True Sacrifice has been made. What the feasts themselves typified, however, was not fulfilled at the cross.

It has been extremely important for God's people in every age to understand that if He was to be with them, they would absolutely need a sacrifice of His choosing. Right from the entrance of sin there was a sacrifice required, "...the LORD God made tunics of skin and clothed them".⁸⁴ Please notice; the LORD God—Jesus Christ Himself—"clothed them" with the offering He provided. This is why we are told in the book of Revelation that Jesus was "...the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world".⁸⁵

Every sacrifice ever made for sin has been a type of the true Lamb of God. This is why, when Adam and Eve accepted God's provision for sin by physically putting this covering on, they could live. When God's ancient people sacrificed by faith and according to God's requirements, God counted them righteous because He saw His Son in their sacrifice. We, too, must put on the righteousness of Christ by asking Him to apply His sacrifice to our account, and I believe that this is what we can achieve through God's Festivals.

Abel's sacrifice was accepted by God, whereas Cain's wasn't. The difference between the offerings was that Cain's sacrifice did not

82 See Numbers 28:9, 10

83 See Numbers 28:3-8

84 Genesis 3:20

85 Revelation 13:8

contain blood and Abel's did. God had required a blood sacrifice to demonstrate the cost of sin, which, in the end would destroy all life if unchecked. This blood sacrifice ultimately pointed forward to the death of God's Son. This non-existence of blood in Cain's sacrifice declared that he did not respect God's request and he decided that he would worship God in his own way.

Abel's sacrifice was accepted because it contained a blood sacrifice, demonstrating that Abel accepted God's current provision for sin and that the cost of forgiveness was only to be found in the death of an innocent victim. The law required the death of the sinner. Therefore, a substitute was provided. Abel recognized this, and he demonstrated it by offering "*the firstlings of his flock*"⁸⁶, making it acceptable to God.

Additional blood was spilled during the special appointed times (the holy days) because it was/is not possible to be in God's presence and have fellowship with Him without such a sacrifice.

That is why there were daily morning and evening sacrifices every day of the year. If God was to be with His people during each day, they would need to have a sacrifice in order to meet the legal demand of the law. The sacrificial law still stands today. The law requires that if we, who are sinners by birth (nature), are to live each day with God, there would have to be the death of an innocent victim. This would satisfy the law that says "*The soul that sins shall die...*"⁸⁷ When we accept the Sacrifice made for us, the law is satisfied; we can now "*come boldly to the throne of grace*".⁸⁸

The difference in the law of the sacrificial system is that now we do not sacrifice pigeons, doves, lambs, bulls, goats, etc. because what they typified has been fulfilled. When we accept Jesus as our

86 Genesis 4:4

87 Ezekial 18:20

88 Hebrews 4:16

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innocent sacrifice, the sacrificial law is satisfied; the sacrifice of Jesus fulfilled the daily sacrifice of animals.

On the Sabbath and on the feasts, there were additional sacrifices as well as the regular morning and evening sacrifices. Every sacrifice prefigured the sacrifice of the True Lamb of God. Ultimately, if we are going to live in the presence of God, it is imperative we understand that “...without shedding blood there is no remission”⁸⁹ of sin. Why were there additional sacrifices at these special times? Everyone needed to understand that “...without shedding blood there is no remission.” Now when we partake of the richness of the feasts, we see Jesus everywhere we turn because He is the substance of the feasts.

89 Hebrews 9:22

Heavenly Timing

At times, we must come to conclusions combining Scripture and reason. We do this when we do not have a clear “thus saith the Lord”. There are examples of this in our teachings. One such example of this is our understanding of the Sabbath. The Genesis account tells us:

Genesis 2: 2, 3

...on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

This text tells us what God did. We conclude from this text that Adam and Eve, as well as their faithful descendants, observed the Sabbath. I believe this to be true; however, we do not have clear Scriptural evidence to substantiate this.

There is no clear Scriptural evidence that the Sabbath was kept by any man or woman before Israel's wilderness experience in Exodus 16 (approximately 2500 years after creation). Yet we correctly conclude that the Sabbath was kept by God's true followers from creation onward.

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For some of the following passages I will be using the Strong's concordance Hebrew word numbering system to take us back to the original Hebrew word so that we can clearly see what the text is and is not saying.

Exodus 5:5 is used as a proof text that Moses brought God's people back to the Sabbath. *"And Pharaoh said, 'Look, the people of the land are many now, and you make them rest from their labor.'"* In this text Moses does not use the word "Sabbath/Shabbath" (Strong's # 7676), but, "rest/shabath" (Strong's # 7673). We reason that this text alludes to the Sabbath because the word "Shabbath"/Sabbath is derived from the word "shabath". The word "shabath", used in Exodus 5:5, is correctly translated as "rest" and not "Sabbath". While connecting these two words is reasonable, it is not without challenge, because the word "Sabbath/Shabbath" is not in the text.

We also use Genesis 26:5 that declares, *"Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws."* Although the Sabbath is not mentioned specifically in the text, we have reasoned that because the Sabbath is a commandment, it must be included. This is a valid connection but let's not stop there. If we can use this text to prove Sabbath observance before Sinai, we can also use it for proof of festival observance before Sinai. By this same reasoning, it would be equally valid to conclude that God was making a clear reference to the feasts as well, because they are called statutes. *"You shall keep it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month."*⁹⁰

There is no clear Scripture to show that the Sabbath was kept by God's people from creation, yet we rightly conclude that it was. I bring this point up because we have this same scenario with the feasts.

90 Leviticus 23:41

There is no clear Scripture stating that the feasts were kept from creation, however, if we will put forth our God given reasoning powers on this topic, I believe there is plenty of evidence to indicate that the feasts were part of God's original plan in His creation. In fact, after a thorough search, we will find that there is more evidence for the feasts being kept pre-Sinai and clear back to the creation account than there is for the Sabbath.

As we have already seen, the feasts will be kept in the kingdom to come. Jesus said, "*For I say unto you, I will no longer eat of it [Passover] until it [Passover] is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.*"⁹¹ If the feasts were a part of God's original creation, then there is no reason that they should have been discontinued. We must not lose sight of the fact that Scripture tells us that it was the "little horn" persecuting power from the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation that "*shall intend to change times and law.*"⁹²

We are going to look at some texts that indicate the feasts most definitely predated the giving of the law at Sinai. As we go through this segment of our study we must be aware of three points:

- The validity of festal celebrations today does not stand or fall on whether the feasts were a part of the creation account. The feasts are valid today because they were not fulfilled at the cross and therefore their fulfillments are still future: "*Shadow of things to come.*"⁹³
- If it can be demonstrated that the festivals were part of God's original plan before sin, then this would seal the case as to their purpose for all mankind through all ages just as we say of the Sabbath.

91 Luke 22:16

92 Daniel 7:25. See also Daniel 7:21; 8:9, 23-25; 11:36 and Revelation 13:5, 6; 17:1, 3-6, 16

93 Colossians 2:17

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- According to Daniel 7:25, the little horn changed God's appointed "times" of worship and not God or Jesus.

The origin of the feasts goes all the way back to creation. On the fourth day, the record says: *"Then God said; let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years."*⁹⁴

Unless someone pointed it out to you, it is very unlikely that you would see the significance of this text in regard to the feasts. The word "seasons" in Genesis 1:14 is the Hebrew word *moed*, which in most places in the Bible is translated as "feast". Now you can see that the meaning of the text changes somewhat. This text is telling us that God will use the heavenly bodies for signs and *moeds* (feasts).

Furthermore, in Luke 21:25, Jesus says that *"there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars"* to indicate the timing of His return. So what do the sun, moon, and stars have to do with the seasons (*moed* or feasts)?

The following commentary is from the NET Bible⁹⁵:

Genesis 1:14

"God said, 'Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them be signs to indicate seasons and days and years...'"*

Margin notes for *:

"The text has 'for signs and for seasons and for days and years.' It seems likely from the meanings of the words involved, that 'signs' is the main idea, followed

94 Genesis 1:14

95 See NET Bible: net.bible.org

by two categories, 'seasons' and 'days and years.' This is the simplest explanation, and one that matches v. 11-13. It could even be rendered 'signs for the fixed seasons' [in Hebrew, *vav* ן] for days and years.'

Let them be for signs. The point is that the sun and the moon were important to fix the days for the seasonal celebrations for the worshipping community.”⁹⁶

A study of the heavenly bodies reveals that the sun, moon, and stars are God's clock in the heavens. The heavenly bodies are the second, minute, and hour hands on God's universal timepiece. In fact, this celestial clock is so accurate that we can know the exact time of day by where the sun is on the horizon. We can know what time of the month by the phase of the moon (one complete cycle of the moon: waxing to waning equals one Biblical month). We know what time of year by the sun's angle on the horizon and by the positioning of the different constellations we can see overhead.

Genesis 1:14 explains God's purpose for the heavenly bodies, *“Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years.”* The sun, moon, and stars are the movements of God's clock that He set in the heavens at creation. The watch you wear on your wrist is patterned after the movements of the earth around the sun. More sophisticated, astronomical clocks are based on the movements of the heavenly bodies as recorded in Genesis.

With astronomical clocks, you can tell exactly what time of year it is by the positioning of these heavenly bodies overhead. This can be done anywhere on earth from whatever vantage point on earth you are at. At any given time of the year, you would be able to see

96 See NET Bible: net.bible.org

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certain constellations; this indicates what time of year it is. There is much already written on this subject that can be found online or at your local library, so I will not explain this further here.

Psalms 104:19 reveals even more to us, “*He appointed the moon for seasons.*”

The moon has no effect on the seasons (spring, summer, fall and winter) as this is caused by the tilt of the axis of the earth. Instead, the moon affects the tides of the oceans as it rotates around the earth every 29-30 days. The word “seasons” in Psalms 104:19 is the same Hebrew word for “seasons” as seen in Genesis 1:14 (*moed*, which means “feasts”).

Because “seasons” in Psalm 104:19 is the same word as in Genesis 1:14, we can now make some sense out of this. The moon is the second hand on God’s celestial clock and is used to set the timing for the feasts. Each time the moon begins a new cycle so, too, a new biblical month begins.

The waxing and waning of the moon determines the span of the month. The new month begins when the moon crescent is sighted (waxing) and ends at the disappearance of the moon (waning). This is how the timing of the feasts is calculated. The new moon marks the beginning of each Biblical month. Each appointed time is calculated from the new moon.⁹⁷

It should be no surprise to anyone that the total number of annual Holy Days is seven—God’s number for completeness; God has a plan. All of these appointed times (*moed*) are timed from the first new moon of the year and follow the moon cycle throughout the remainder of the year. Each feast falling on a specified day from a particular new moon. The Feast of Unleavened Bread (the spring seven day festival) and the Feast of Tabernacles (the fall eight day

97 See Appendix I for a calendar of God’s Festivals, p 173

festival) both begin on full moons.

Now we can see why God “*appointed the moon for seasons*”⁹⁸ (*moed* or feasts). The moon is the second hand on His celestial clock which He set in the heavens at creation. Without the new moon it would be very difficult to know the exact timing of the festivals.

The Timing of God’s Festivals

Pentecost

Most Bible scholars recognize that the law was given from Mount Sinai on the Day of Pentecost. God chose Pentecost to give His law to His people. It is not clear why God waited until Pentecost to give His law, but I rather suspect that it has to do with the fact that without the Spirit of God, His law cannot be kept.

The giving of the Spirit is connected not only with Pentecost but also with obedience.⁹⁹ The Spirit of God was given, along with His law, to make obedience to the law possible.

Ezekial 36:26, 27

I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

We, as Seventh-day Adventists, are waiting for the prophesied outpouring of the Spirit known as the Latter Rain. An understanding of Pentecost typology strongly suggests that this will happen on a Pentecost. The typical outpouring of the Latter Rain (Acts 2) happened on Pentecost, therefore the final outpouring (fulfillment) will also happen on a Pentecost. Remember these things are typical in event and also in time.

⁹⁸ Psalm 104:19

⁹⁹ See Acts 2 and Acts 5:32

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Passover

The simplest example of the feasts pre-dating Sinai is found in Exodus 12 when the Israelites kept Passover on the eve of their flight out of Egypt.

In Exodus 12:40-41, we find that *“the sojourn of the children of Israel who had lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years—on the very same day—it came to pass that all the armies of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.”*

This text indicates that their stay in Egypt began and ended on Passover. We need to recall that Jacob's (Israel's) flight into Egypt was his salvation from a desperate situation. Israel's salvation coming into Egypt and going from Egypt happened on Passover.

Passover carries with it salvation typology in regard to leaving a dire situation for a desired destination. This typology should not be overlooked as we look for the ultimate Passover fulfillment that Jesus talked about in Luke 22.

The Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement and Tabernacles

In Exodus 5:1 Moses tells Pharaoh, *“Thus says the LORD God of Israel: ‘Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.’”* There is no specific indication of which feast the LORD is referring to but considering the time setting of this text, we can make an educated guess as to which feast it would have been.

This request by Moses to hold a feast in the wilderness was made before any of the ten plagues fell in Egypt. The first three plagues were experienced by both the Israelites and Egyptians, the last seven were poured out on those who did not accept God's

provision for sin.¹⁰⁰ This parallels the seven last plagues in the book of Revelation.

The seven last plagues of Revelation 16 are the fulfillment of a shadow event, which were the seven last plagues of Egypt. The plagues of Revelation 16 will be poured out immediately after the close of probation (the Day of Atonement experience in Revelation 15). It is logical to conclude that God poured out the plagues in Egypt after there was a judgment (Day of Atonement).

We must not lose sight of the fact that *“all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages have come.”*¹⁰¹ Ellen White comments on the fulfillment of the festal calendar at the closing scenes of earth’s history: “The types [plural] which relate to the Second Advent must be fulfilled at the time pointed out in the symbolic service.”¹⁰²

Each of the feasts are typical of significant events of the plan of salvation. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the feast that Moses was speaking of was connected to the fall festivals that involve judgment (Trumpets or The Day of Atonement). There are six months between the fall festivals and Passover. I believe from the Day of Atonement to the Passover would have been enough time for the seven last plagues to be poured out on the Egyptians. The possible implications in the book of Revelation as to the fulfillment of the festal calendar in regard to this timing should not be overlooked.

100 See Exodus 8:22

101 1 Corinthians 10:11

102 Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p 399

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A General Festal Reference

*“Blow the trumpet at the time of the New Moon, at the full moon, on our solemn feast day. For this is a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob. This He established in Joseph for a testimony, when he went through the land of Egypt.”*¹⁰³ Therefore, if it was a law of the God of Jacob (Joseph’s father) to *“Blow the trumpet at the time of the New Moon, at the full moon, on our solemn feast day”* then surely Jacob was also aware of the feasts. Blowing the trumpet on the New Moon was the announcement that the new month had begun; this was critical to know for the timing of the feasts. Both the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Feast of Tabernacles began on the full moon; the trumpet was also blown at that time to announce the commencement of the feast. I think it would be safe to assume from this text that Joseph definitely knew about the festival calendar. If he knew about it, where did he learn of it? The text tells us that it was a law of the God of Jacob. Jacob would have taught his son, Joseph, about the laws of his God, which, according to this text, included the feasts.

This text clearly states that the feasts predate Sinai, in this case, by approximately 400 years.

Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread

The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah may be connected to the timing of the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread. Scripture indicates that on the night of Sodom’s destruction, Lot *“made them [the angels] a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.”*¹⁰⁴ Considering the typological meaning and the timing of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, this is very logical.

¹⁰³ Psalm 81:3-5, see also Numbers 10:10

¹⁰⁴ Genesis 19:3

Remember “*all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages have come.*”¹⁰⁵ Paul also tells us that these festivals “*are a shadow of things to come*”¹⁰⁶ We are told in the book of Jude that the destruction of “Sodom and Gomorrah ...is set forth as an example [type/shadow], suffering the vengeance of eternal fire”.

The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Israel’s Passover in Egypt including the judgment followed by the seven last plagues, the giving of the law on Pentecost at Mt. Sinai and Pentecost in Acts 2 are all types of the fulfillments that are still in the future. These examples are types in event and also in time. I have only mentioned a few examples of many that are in the Bible.

105 1 Corinthians 10:11

106 Colossians 2:17

Colossians 2: Verses 14, 16 & 17

- 14 *...having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.*
- 16 *So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths,*
- 17 *which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.*

Colossians 2:16 is the verse which encourages individuals to ask, 'If the feast days, new moons and Sabbaths were nailed to the cross (done away with upon Christ's death), why do Seventh-day Adventists insist on holding on to the Sabbath?'

Traditionally, Seventh-day Adventists have explained that Colossians 2:16 refers only to the feasts, new moons and the ceremonial Sabbaths and does not include the weekly Sabbath. I would suggest an alternate understanding of this verse. It is not the festivals, new moons or Sabbaths in general that were nailed to the cross, rather it was the 'handwriting of requirements' (specific laws given to ancient Israel by God) which were nailed to the cross.

Nailed to the Cross

We need to investigate exactly what was, and what was not, nailed to the cross. Colossians 2:14 says:

- 14 *...having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.*

Whatever Paul is talking about here is definitely wiped out, cancelled, and erased. But was it the Feast Days, New Moons, and Sabbaths that were taken out of the way or was it something else? What was the “*handwriting of requirements that was against us*” that were “*nailed to the cross*”?

Colossians 2:13 gives us the context:

- 13 *And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven all your trespasses.*

Trespasses (sin) and forgiveness are the focal points in this text. In the Old Testament system, specific penalties were carried out on the transgressor of the law. For example, in John 8:4, the Pharisees brought to Jesus a woman “*caught in adultery, in the very act.*” According to the law, she should have been stoned. This punishment was to be carried out precisely as prescribed by the law.¹⁰⁷ These regulations or requirements were handwritten in a book or scroll and were also called curses of the law. In this woman’s case, the record (the trespass) that stood against her was adultery, the legal demand was that this sin was punishable by death; the law demanded that she die.

Other Bible translations clearly indicate this point:

¹⁰⁷ See Deuteronomy 17:9-11

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English Standard Version:

And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record that stood against us with its legal demand. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

New Revised Standard Version:

...erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross.

When Jesus accepted our sins as his own, He accepted the full curse of the law; He accepted our eternal death sentence—the full penalty for sin was experienced by Him at the cross. For the penitent one who accepts Jesus as their sin bearer, the penalty for their sin passes from himself to Jesus, “*taking it out of the way and nailing it to the cross.*”¹⁰⁸ Praise God! We are fully forgiven because Jesus has accepted our sins and the penalty for our sins. This is the heartbeat of the Gospel.

Paul put it another way in 2 Timothy 1:10: “*...Our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.*” While the Roman soldiers were nailing our Savior—who had become ‘*sin for us*’¹⁰⁹, to the cross, God was nailing our death sentence to the cross. He is the only One who can transfer our penalty to another. “*The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord.*”¹¹⁰

When the Roman soldiers nailed Jesus to the cross, God nailed our death penalty to the cross, never needing to be paid by us because it was paid by Jesus.

108 Colossians 2:14

109 2 Corinthians 5:21

110 Romans 6:23

Paul is not saying that the feasts, new moons, and Sabbaths were nailed to the cross but that **our record** and **eternal death sentence** were nailed to the cross. It was the record of our sins and the penalty for them that were against us: “*He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.*”¹¹¹

Understanding these verses in their proper context, we cannot say that the feasts were “against” and “contrary” to anyone. Nor can we say via Colossians 2:14-17 that the feasts were “nailed to the cross.” The *record of trespasses* was nailed to the cross, not the practice of the feasts, new moons or Sabbath.

Evangelicals denounce Seventh-day Adventists for our inconsistency in our interpretation of Colossians 2:16:

“Therefore let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths.”

Evangelicals are more consistent than we are with this text. They conclude that the Sabbath in this verse is the Seventh-day, which it is, but they err when they say that Paul is doing away with the Sabbath as well as the Feast Days and New Moons. They are consistent within the text, but have Paul doing away with the whole package, when in fact he is not doing away with any of it. Paul is saying that it was *our record of sin* and *our death sentence* that were nailed to the cross. He is telling the Colossians to *not let anyone judge them for marking Feast Days, New Moons and Sabbaths* as they “*are shadows of things to come*”.¹¹²

The Timing of the Colossians 2:16 Sabbath

Therefore let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding

¹¹¹ Colossians 2:14

¹¹² Colossians 2:17

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a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths.

The word Sabbath, in Colossians 2:16, is from the Greek word *Sabbaton*. This word, correctly translated, is singular, designating “the” Sabbath, and not plural as some translations have it. The English Standard Version of the Bible shows Sabbath in the singular whereas the New King James Version renders it plural, which has led to the incorrect conclusion that the plural reference to Sabbath includes the feast days.

In the past, most scholars recognized the King James Version as the authorized version of the Bible. Now, it is generally accepted that this translation is not without fault. Confusion is evident in this text, “*An holyday or of the new moon or of the Sabbath days.*”¹¹³ The word “days” is not in the original text. The text should read, “*An holyday or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath.*” This plural rendering has led to mistakenly including the seven annual holydays in the term “*the Sabbath days*” instead of the correct interpretation that Sabbath days occur once weekly.

The Greek word *Sabbaton* is used throughout the New Testament as referring only to the seventh-day Sabbath. There is much support cross-referenced throughout the Bible that defines this Sabbath as a weekly event rather than an annual event.

Many of our own theologians are now seeing Colossians 2:16 in this light. William E. Richardson, former chair of the Department of Religion, Andrews University, wrote an article entitled “Sabbath: Nailed to the Cross?”

Below is a short excerpt from his article.

The Issue of Sabbath

In the phrase “festivals, new moons, or sabbaths”

¹¹³ Colossians 2:16 — King James Version

(heortes, noumenias, sabbaton) in verse 16 (New Revised Standard Version), the identity of the sabbaths has occasioned considerable debate. This phrase is found nowhere else in the New Testament, but occurs five times in the Septuagint (2 Chron. 2:4; 31:3; Neh. 10:33; Eze. 45:17, Hosea 2:11).¹¹⁴ Each time, speaking of the burnt offerings other than the daily offerings, the reference is to the Sabbaths (weekly), new moons (monthly), and appointed feasts (yearly). At times the order is reversed, but in each case, “new moon” is in the middle, thus making a logical sequence from weekly to yearly or vice versa. The implication is that the sabbath being described is the weekly Sabbath.

Another point to consider is that the ceremonial sabbaths were part of the annual feasts to which the word heortes referred. Accordingly, when Paul here refers to “sabbaths,” if he meant the ceremonial sabbaths, he was needlessly repeating himself. In that case he would be saying, “Let no one pass judgment on you in regard to a feast day/ceremonial sabbath, or in regard to a new moon, or in regard to a ceremonial sabbath,” a statement neither logical nor likely.

This article was printed in the May 1997 issue of Ministry Magazine.¹¹⁵

114 Septuagint (sometimes abbreviated LXX) is the name given to the Greek translation of the Jewish Scriptures. The Septuagint has its origin in Alexandria, Egypt and was translated between 300-200 BC

115 For further study on Colossians 2:14-17, you can read the entire article online in the archive section of ministrymagazine.org

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Old Testament support of the Sabbath(s) reference

As mentioned in this article by William E. Richardson it is interesting to note that while this is the only place in the New Testament where we see a text using the complete phrase “festival, new moon or Sabbaths”, there is similar text construction used in the Old Testament, of which Paul was an ardent student. The texts include:

Nehemiah 10:31-33

“If the peoples of the land brought wares or any grain to sell on the Sabbath day, we would not buy it from them on the Sabbath, or on a holy day; and we would forego the seventh year’s produce and the exacting of every debt. Also we made ordinances for ourselves, to exact from ourselves yearly one-third of a shekel for the service of the house of our God: for the showbread, for the regular grain offering, for the regular burnt offering of the Sabbaths, the New Moons, and the set feasts.”

Ezekial 45:17

“Then it shall be the prince’s part to give burnt offerings, grain offerings, and drink offerings, at the feasts, the New Moons, the Sabbaths, and at all the appointed seasons of the house of Israel.”

2 Chronicles 8:13

“Then Solomon offered burnt offering to the LORD on the altar of the LORD which he had built before the vestibule, according to the daily rate offering, according to the commandment of Moses for the Sabbaths, the New Moons and the three appointed yearly feasts; the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks and the Feasts of Tabernacles.”

2 Chronicles 31:3

“The king also appointed a portion of his possessions for the burnt offerings: for the morning and evening burnt offerings, the burnt offerings for the Sabbaths and the New Moons and the set feasts, as it is written in the Law of the LORD.”

Hosea 2:11

“And I will put an end to all her mirth, her feasts, her new moons, her Sabbaths, and all her appointed feasts.”

In all but one of these texts there is a progression of the festal calendar from either weekly (Sabbath) to monthly (new moons) to yearly (festivals) or the reverse order, yearly (festivals), monthly (new moons), weekly (Sabbath). It would seem logical to conclude from these texts that when the writers are referring to festivals they are including all of the annual events, including the Holy Days that are marked during these *annual* festivals; the new moons are the *monthly* events; and the *weekly* event is the Sabbath, which is a singular event. Therefore these Sabbaths do not include the feasts, they are the weekly Sabbath only.

The feasts were a critical part of their fellowship with God

God placed such importance on the feasts that Moses instructed Israel to use their tithe to supply not only their needs but their “desires” while in Jerusalem to celebrate the feasts.¹¹⁶ The point being that those who would otherwise not be able to afford to go to the feasts would be able to use their tithe to help with their expenses.

The reason why God wanted His people at the feasts is stated in Deuteronomy 14:23 “...that you may learn to fear the LORD your God

116 See Deuteronomy 14:22-27

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always.” Education about God — ‘*that you may learn*’ — and His will for our lives is vital to renew our minds after the mind of Christ. This education was a central purpose for the festivals.

Because the male was the designated spiritual head of the household, God’s instruction to Moses was that every male who was physically able to go up to keep the feasts, must do so.

Exodus 23: 14-17

Three times you shall keep a feast to Me in the year: You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread...at the time appointed... and the Feast of Harvest [Pentecost],...and the Feast of Ingathering [Feast of Tabernacles], which is at the end of the year, when you have gathered the fruit of your labors from the field. Three times in the year all your males shall appear before the LORD God.

The feasts were, and are, God’s appointed times for His people to meet with him.

God gave the festivals as a gift of love, to be a blessing for His children. The feasts were intended to be a revelation of a loving God and an unfolding of His plan to save us; they are a compacted prophecy of the plan of salvation.

It's in the Scriptures

There is Biblical and historical evidence which proves that the feasts were not fulfilled and, therefore, not 'nailed to' (done away with) at the cross. Our Savior said:

Luke 22:15, 16

'With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.'

My thoughtful understanding of this verse is that:

- Jesus said He would not eat of the Passover feast again until the kingdom of God.
- While Jesus said He would not personally observe the Passover until the kingdom of God arrived, the message is that they, his people, would continue to mark the festival as it had been provided to them by God and in so doing, look forward in faith until the time when God returned to earth to take us home to celebrate it with Him.

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1 Corinthians 11:24, 26

And when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

What Paul Saw in the Festivals

As we will see, Paul is clearly teaching on the observance of the Passover in these texts.

A study of the book of Acts and the writings of Paul clearly teach that the feasts continued to be an integral part of church life in the apostolic church following the death of Christ.¹¹⁷

Luke records in Acts 20:6 that he and Paul kept the feast of Unleavened Bread at Philippi, "*But we sailed away after the Days of Unleavened Bread.*"

Ellen White confirms this in her book *The Acts of the Apostles* on pages 390-391:

"At Philippi Paul tarried to keep the Passover... The Philippians were the most loving and truehearted of the apostle's converts, and during the eight days of the feast he enjoyed peaceful and happy communion with them."

So we know that Paul and Luke were keeping the feast in

¹¹⁷ The Apostolic church was the name of the church while the Apostles were still alive, following the death of Jesus (until shortly after the turn into the second century C.E.)

Philippi with newly converted Christians approximately twenty years after the cross.¹¹⁸ There is no change in the observance of the festivals recorded in Scripture up to this point in time and I have yet to find one to the close of its record.

Luke Validates the Festivals in Acts

We should be aware of the fact that Luke, a Gentile convert, wrote Acts and used the feasts as time references as if he was totally in tune with them.

A question comes to mind: Why, so many years after the cross—twenty to thirty years—was the festal calendar used for referencing time if the festal calendar was no longer valid, especially since the record was not written for the Jews only but for the Christian church, of which we are a part? Could it be because the feasts continued to be celebrated as the Sabbath was? As the Sabbath is used as a reference for timing in the book of Acts, so are the feasts. Let us closely examine these references.

A careful study reveals their continued observance after the cross by the followers of Christ. The book of Acts has most of the New Testament festival references.

Acts 2:1

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come.

God waited until “*the Day of Pentecost had fully come*” to pour out His Spirit. God is on time every time. We may not be keeping His calendar but He sure is; you can count on it.

This feast has met only partial fulfillment; the complete fulfillment is yet to come in the final outpouring of the Spirit

118 The cross refers to the crucifixion of Jesus

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known as the Latter Rain. God is consistent; this Latter Rain outpouring will not only be fulfilled as to the event but also as to the time specified in the festal calendar.

Acts 18: 20, 21

When they asked him to stay a longer time with them, he did not consent, but took leave of them, saying, 'I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem.'

Luke quotes Paul as saying he must “keep” the upcoming feast rather than simply saying he would attend it. At this time Paul was in Ephesus (in Asia) in the synagogue reasoning with the Jews.

I believe Paul wanted to keep this feast in Jerusalem with the apostles and elders because he wanted share what God had been doing through him for the churches in Asia.

Could it be possible that those in Ephesus would have liked Paul to keep that feast with them?

First Corinthians 16:8¹¹⁹ seems to indicate that Paul had already introduced Pentecost to the Corinthians and Ephesians. Acts 15:2 indicates that Jerusalem was, at that time, the headquarters for the Christian church. I believe this to be the main reason why Paul wanted to keep it there.

Acts 20:6

But we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread.

Why did they sail away after the Days of Unleavened Bread?

119 1 Corinthians 16:7-9 “For I do not wish to see you now on the way; but I hope to stay a while with you, if the Lord permits. I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.”

Because Paul and Luke were keeping the Feast of Unleavened Bread in Philippi and did not leave until after they had celebrated it.

Ellen White wrote in *The Acts of the Apostles*, “At Philippi Paul tarried to keep the Passover. The Philippians were the most loving and truehearted of the apostle’s converts, and during the eight days of the feast he enjoyed peaceful and happy communion with them.”¹²⁰ Paul was keeping the feast in Philippi with newly converted Christians.

Why the feasts were no longer held only in Jerusalem

It has been said that the feasts could not be kept anywhere but in Jerusalem, but Jesus said, “*Your house is left unto you desolate.*”¹²¹ The gospel was to now go to the Gentiles. Because of the rejection of the Messiah, the sanctuary in Jerusalem was left desolate of the presence of God. What purpose would it serve to bring someone to a sanctuary where the presence of God was gone?

The sanctuary in Jerusalem had lost its significance after the Jews rejected their Messiah. The temple services no longer had any purpose because what the services pointed to was rejected—“*The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*”¹²² Therefore, if the Jewish leaders were not pointing the worshipers to the Messiah that had come and died for the sins of the world, there was no longer any purpose for the temple. God made this extremely clear when He allowed the Romans to destroy the temple in 70 CE.

Could there be a deeper meaning to the words of Jesus when

120 Ellen White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp 390-391

121 Matthew 23:38

122 John 1:29

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He said to the woman at the well, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.”¹²³

Paul’s taking the gospel to the Gentiles and keeping the feast in Gentile territory teaches by example that the feasts could now be kept in any location.

Acts 20:16

For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost.

After Paul and Luke had kept the feast of Unleavened Bread with the Philippian church, they rushed on to Jerusalem to be there for Pentecost.

Acts 27:9

Now when much time had been spent, and sailing was now dangerous because the Fast was already over.

The “Fast” here refers to the Day of Atonement. The fact that Luke refers to the Day of Atonement as “*the Fast*” means that the Day of Atonement, at the time Luke penned Acts, still carried with it its original practice and meaning.

Here again Luke is marking time with the feasts, clearly indicating that the festal calendar was still being used at least two decades after the cross. Luke assumes that the readers of Acts, who were a mixture of Jews and Gentiles and who today are mostly Gentiles, would be familiar with this festival calendar.

As Seventh-day Adventists, how can we say that the Day of Atonement met its fulfillment at the cross? If we say the Day of Atonement met its fulfillment at the cross are we not denying our

123 John 4:21

own end-time theology? Our message demands that the Day of Atonement did not meet its fulfillment at the cross, and we should therefore continue marking it.

1 Corinthians 5:7,8

Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

When I began to search the New Testament for a direct command to observe the feasts, I could not find one until 1 Corinthians 5:7-8 jumped out at me:

...Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast...

The beauty of this call is that it is not a command but an invitation to celebrate the feast.

I felt the same desire for truth when I first became a Seventh-day Adventist and searched for a command in the New Testament that indicated we should keep the Sabbath. The only one that is close to a command is in the book of Hebrews:

For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: 'And God rested on the seventh day from all His works' and again in this place; 'They shall not enter My rest.... There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.'¹²⁴

Sabbath Observance Continued After the Cross

124 Hebrews 4:4, 5, 9

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The best support for Sabbath observance is by the example the apostles set for us in scripture after the cross and by the absence of any new law to the contrary.

Acts 13: 42, 44

And when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath.... And the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God.

Acts 16:13

And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there.

By their ongoing observance of the Sabbath it is clear that there was no change in the sacredness of the Sabbath. This same reasoning can be used for the feasts.

Luke. 22:15, 16

Then He said to them, with fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

Jesus is not saying in this text that the Passover was not to be celebrated again but that *He* would not celebrate it until He can personally celebrate it with us again in the kingdom of God. The great Passover will be fulfilled in the kingdom of God; therefore it will be celebrated in the kingdom of God. Because the Passover was celebrated by the disciples after the death of Jesus and will be celebrated in the future kingdom, is there any logical reason why it should not be celebrated in the present?

Galatians 4:9-10

"But now after you have known God, or rather are known by

God, how is it that you turn to the weak and beggarly elements, to which desire again to be in bondage? You observe days and months and seasons and years."

As always we must take things in context, this text is no exception to this rule. In the past these texts have been interpreted according to our traditional understanding that the festivals were done away with at the sacrifice of Jesus. By saying this, we are interpreting the Word through our current flawed understanding. This is a recipe for faulty Bible exegesis. In order to establish that we are holding to sound Biblical teaching we must critically examine the text within its original context; this method will prove that either we are, or are not, holding to sound doctrine.

As we have been studying this subject we are challenging our traditional thinking to its core. Many believe by Paul's question to the Galatians he is criticising the Galatian believers for keeping God's festivals that He gave to His people—Israel as recorded in Leviticus 23. "How is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?" However, a careful study of the context of these verses clearly teach that the day, months, seasons, and years spoken of in this text must be referring to pagan festivals.

We will now look at the context of these texts:

Galatians 4:3-10

"Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. But then,

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indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods. But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days and months and seasons and years."

First of all, Paul opens the topic in verse 3 of being "in bondage under the elements of the world". These elements are the same elements that are brought to view in verse 9, "But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?" Paul is talking to people who previously did not know God (i.e. Gentiles) but now, after conversion, have been brought to a knowledge of Him, "now after you have known God how is it that you turn [back] again to the weak and beggarly elements" "of the world" (see verse 3). Without a doubt, these are the Galatian believers that were Gentile converts to the faith. These converts were turning back to their previous practices before they accepted their new faith.

They could not have been returning to the God-given festivals, because **they never kept them to begin with**: you can only turn again to something that you had been doing. This is why Paul says that they were in bondage to elements of the world when they did not know God.

In verse 10 Paul specifically states what he is referring to. I am always in awe at how the Bible is as applicable today as it was when it was penned. When I became a Seventh-day Adventist in the fall of 1983 I was told in no uncertain terms that the Sabbath was the true day of worship that God had originally given and had been counterfeited in Sunday. I was also told at that time that Christmas and Easter also had their origins in paganism; I went to work on

that one and found that this was true. However, at that time, I was not aware that Christmas and Easter were also **counterfeits** of the festivals of God, as is Sunday a counterfeit of true Sabbath. It would be several years down the road before I would come to this understanding. The internet is full of information about these and other ancient pagan festivals as well as those that would have been celebrated around the time of Paul's writings.

After being told that Christmas and Easter had pagan origins I could never understand why the church that I had become a member of continued to mark them. To the credit of the Seventh-day Adventist church of the time, though, there was never any encouragement to celebrate these two festivals; they just came and went without any special attention.

Today, however, Christmas and Easter are becoming a worship focus in the year. In many Seventh-day Adventist churches and schools, there are now full blown Christmas and Easter programs. Are we going back to the weak and beggarly elements of the world just as the Galatians did? When any person or church stops growing and moving forward in truth and understanding the inevitable result is a retreat backward in the direction from whence they came; whether this be to legalism, as in the case of the Jewish believers, or paganism, as in the case of the Gentiles.

Furthermore, if Paul, in the book of Galatians, is rebuking the Galatian believers for keeping the festivals of God by referring to them as "weak and beggarly elements" "of the world", he is in direct contradiction to his continued practice of celebrating these festivals, as has already been shown from the Bible in this book. It is accepted that Paul wrote the book of Galatians between 53 and 55 C.E.; this is approximately five years before Luke and Paul are keeping the Feast of Unleavened Bread with the Philippian Gentile/Jewish believers (see Acts 20:6). If Paul rebuked the Galatians for

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keeping the feasts five years prior to Act 20 he did a 180 degree flip in his thinking because in Acts 20—five years later, he is keeping a Biblical feast. This seems to be a blatant contradiction. However, this contradiction is in our minds and not in the Word itself. This is only an apparent contradiction because of our traditional understanding of the text. I have found that when there is an apparent contradiction in the Bible, it is not with the Bible at all but with us.

Paul, in all of his teaching, and by his own word says:

Act 26:3-5

“Therefore I beg you to hear me patiently. “My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know. They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.”

1 Corinthians 5:7-8

“Therefore, purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are, unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

“Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

Paul knew the purposes of God's festivals with all his understanding. Firstly, to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. The festivals are the true divine appointed times for worship to give understanding of the plan of salvation and fellowship of the saints. Paul would never have said that the God-appointed times were weak, beggarly, and worldly. This, in the true sense of the word, would be blasphemy.

We must clean the dust and mud of tradition off, and look once again through the lenses of Scripture to interpret the Galatians texts.

Isaiah 66:23

'And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,' says the LORD.

It would appear from this old testament text that the Sabbath as well as the New Moon shall be celebrated in the New Earth. Remember, the New Moon sets the timing for the feasts. Therefore, if the New Moon stands in the kingdom, this would indicate that the feasts will also stand.

Zechariah 14:4, 12, 16

And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two... And this shall be the plague with which the Lord will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet, Their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, and their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths ...And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

The context is clear: this event is in the future. It seems logical that this event will happen on the earth after the 7th millennium¹²⁵ when all the wicked of all ages will fight against the New Jerusalem. They will try to overtake it but will be destroyed by the

¹²⁵This destruction of those who oppose God happens after the 7th millennium from creation of the world. This is also after our reign with Christ for 1000 years; see Revelation 20:4-9

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second death¹²⁶, at which point sin and sinners will be no more. The celebration of our deliverance and our oneness with God will be celebrated from “year to year” throughout eternity!

When all these texts are studied together, it would seem that the apostles, as well as the converts to Christianity, celebrated these feasts after the cross. The fact that the Sabbath was kept by the followers of Jesus after the cross is often cited as evidence that the Sabbath Commandment (fourth commandment of the Decalogue¹²⁷) did not change. The same can be said of the feasts. Furthermore, the Biblical support that the Sabbath will be kept in the new earth is used for additional evidence that there has been no change in the Sabbath Commandment. Again, the same can be said of the feasts as Jesus made it clear to the apostles at the last Passover He celebrated with them:

Luke 22:15, 16

With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

¹²⁶ See Revelation 20:14

¹²⁷ The Decalogue is the Ten Commandments given Moses on Mt. Sinai; see Exodus 20

The Jerusalem Council: Acts 15

Acts 15 is often cited as proof that the feasts have been done away with. However, a careful reading reveals that the feasts are not the topic under discussion; in fact, the feasts are not even mentioned in the chapter.¹²⁸ The issue here was twofold:

- How was a person saved; by faith or by works?
- What were to be the minimum requirements expected of *“...those from among the Gentiles turning to God”*¹²⁹

These two points had become controversial in the newly developing church because *“certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, ‘unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved’”*¹³⁰ Notice the text says that *“unless you are circumcised ...you cannot be saved.”* This was never the case in any age; everyone who has been and will be saved will be saved on the account of their belief in a risen Savior¹³¹ and not by their works of the law.

Faith’s place in our Christian experience is confirmed by Paul

128 See Acts 15 in Appendix 3, p 180

129 Acts 15:19

130 Acts 15:1

131 Exception to this: Acts 17:30 — *Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.*

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in Romans 4. Paul makes it very plain that Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation, the one to whom was given the rite of circumcision, was accounted righteous *“while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also.”*¹³²

It was not by Abraham’s works but by his faith that he was accounted righteous.¹³³ Herein lays the main point being dealt with in Acts 15. There were men of the sect of Pharisees who believed in Jesus, yet rose up saying, *“It is necessary to circumcise them and to command them to keep the Law of Moses.”*¹³⁴ This was such an issue that the apostles and elders came together in Jerusalem to consider this matter:

*And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: “Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.”*¹³⁵

The yoke these “men of the sect of Pharisees” were commanding the new converts to put on was clearly salvation by works/law.

At the conclusion of the Jerusalem council, a letter was sent to the Gentiles stating that *“...it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to*

132 Romans 4:11

133 See Romans 4:9

134 Acts 15:5

135 Acts 15:7-11

*lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well.”*¹³⁶

We need to understand that this was a minimum requirements list. We cannot conclude by this text that these changes would be the only changes they would ever make. What about the ten commandments, Sabbath, tithing, dietary laws and so on? They are not listed; does this mean they are done away with? No.

The new converts in Acts 15, along with all those who have ever been grafted into the tree of God, will grow in the knowledge of His will and bear fruits (works) worthy of repentance as He leads them heavenward.

How much is asked of “those from among the Gentiles turning to God?” (Acts 15:19)

This issue of faith and obedience is still a problem for the church even to this day. How much do we ask of those who are turning toward God and joining the church? I believe God would be well pleased if His church today would learn these two lessons from the book of Acts—making the issue of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ paramount to one’s salvation, and leaving the obedience to that faith with God and with His timing.

Paul Kept the Feasts of the LORD

According to Scripture, Paul continued keeping the feasts after his conversion and the Acts 15 Council. Paul’s new-birth experience took place in chapter nine in the book of Acts, which was

136 Acts 15: 28-29

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approximately 35-40 CE. About ten years later in Acts 20: 6, 7 we see him keeping the Days of Unleavened Bread.

- 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.*
- 7 *And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.*

By the record of Scripture, it would seem this was his practice until his death. Some insist that the only reason Paul kept the feasts was in order to appease and reach the Jews. This traditional viewpoint cannot be supported by scripture.

God gave the Festivals, New Moons and Sabbath to teach not only of God's goodness, but also to teach the plan of Salvation, from beginning to end. According to Ellen White, they were "*not only commemorative but also typical.*"¹³⁷

It does not seem logical that Christ would abandon any typical system until it collides with the reality, at which point the teaching tool would no longer be needed because the reality has come. To the Jew, the Passover lamb was a lamb. Our Passover Lamb is Christ, the true Passover Lamb. Therefore, Paul says, "*Christ, our Passover was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast...*"¹³⁸ The context of this verse has Paul encouraging the Corinthians to keep the feast of Unleavened Bread in the right spirit.

Furthermore, it would seem by this text that for the Corinthian church, keeping the feast was not the issue here—that practice was a given. The point of the text is the spirit in which the feast was to

137 Ellen White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p 541

138 1 Corinthians 5:7,8

be kept, “*not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*”¹³⁹

It is also important to note that Paul still refers to the festival calendar on this date (approximately 56 CE). The fact that Paul still refers to the feasts twenty-plus years after the death of Christ is not proof that they should be kept, but, it is evidence that the feasts continued as part of the regular practice of the New Testament church.

139 1 Corinthians 5:7, 8

Ellen White: Understanding New Light and New Truth

The terms ‘new light’ and ‘new truth’ can be used interchangeably, however they are sometimes used incorrectly.

New light, by definition, is something that has not been previously understood by anyone. A person may look at something in scripture several times without comprehending it; and then, out of nowhere it would seem, they begin to receive understanding. This is one of the ways that the Spirit of God works. The individual may think that this understanding is new light. However, while it may be new light to the individual, this does not make it new light. If there has been understanding of a truth in the past and it is just now being restored it should not be considered as “new light or new truth” but a restoration of old light or old truth.

There are some who have chosen to adopt the festival calendar into their lives, believing it will bring a better understanding of God and the plan of salvation. This was God’s original purpose for the feasts, and therefore, to celebrate the feasts would bring glory to God.

However, the feasts should not be considered as new light or new truth if one believes the early Christian church taught these things. What we are really dealing with here is something that has

been lost sight of for many generations, just as was the Sabbath. While the Sabbath was new truth to the pioneers of the Adventist Church, it was not technically new *truth*. It was an old truth that was new to the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

Ellen White understood this concept well when she made these statements:

Review and Herald, Feb 25, 1890

“There are old, yet new truths still to be added to the treasures of our knowledge.”

1888 Materials, p.333

“There are glorious truths to come before the people of God. Privileges and duties which they do not even suspect to be in the Bible will be laid open before the followers of Christ. As they follow on in the path of humble obedience, doing His will, they will know more and more of the oracles of God and be established in right doctrines.”

A good example of *new truth* would be the prophecies of the books of Daniel and Revelation. It is quite clear from scripture that Daniel and John did not fully understand the things they wrote. “*Although I heard I did not understand...*”¹⁴⁰ These things were to be understood in the time of the end.

Daniel 12:4

But you, Daniel shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; and many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.

According to the context, the knowledge that is to increase is an understanding of Daniel's prophecies.

Therefore, the understanding of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation in the time of the end is correctly considered *new truth* or *new light*. These prophecies have been studied by many throughout history; however, there has been little understanding. The understanding of these books was not to come “*until the time of the end*”.

A good example of a teaching that should not be considered new truth is the state of the dead. The understanding that the dead are buried and do not go to heaven at death but await the resurrection at the Second Advent of Jesus was understood by all the Biblical writers¹⁴¹ and the early post apostolic church leaders. I would like to cite an example of this for two reasons. First, to see how the post-apostolic church fathers understood death and a resurrection to follow at the Second Coming of Jesus. Second, to validate the position I have put forward in this book that the Apostles and those they handed the torch of truth to, not only continued to keep the festivals but they taught others to as well.

‘We observe the exact day: neither adding, nor taking away. For in Asia also great lights have *fallen asleep*, which *shall rise again* on the day of the Lord’s coming, when he shall come with glory from heaven, and shall seek out all the saints. Among these are Philip, one of the twelve apostles, who fell asleep in Hieropolis: and his two aged virgins daughters and another daughter, who lived in the Holy Spirit and now *rests at Ephesus*: and moreover, John, who was both a witness and a teacher, who reclined upon the bosom of the Lord, and, being a priest, wore

141 See 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; Daniel 12:1, 2

the sacerdotal plate. He *fell asleep* at Ephesus. And Polycarp in Smyrna, who was a bishop and martyr... All these observed the fourteenth day of the Passover [Pascha] according to the Gospel, deviating in no respect, but following the rule of Faith.’¹⁴²

The fact that the post apostolic church fathers understood and taught the correct understanding of what happens when a person dies—sleep—and that they “shall rise again on the day of the Lord’s coming” leads me to believe that the rest of their statement is true also, in that they—the post apostolic church fathers—“observed the fourteenth day of the Passover [Pascha] according to the Gospel, deviating in no respect, but following the rule of Faith.’ According to this statement, the feasts were and therefore should be today a part of the Gospel message. This is very logical because when the teachings in the festivals are understood they are good news—“gospel”. This statement will be further covered later in this book.

Our pioneers came to understand this truth regarding the state of the dead and the resurrection early on in their experience. The state of the dead was new truth to them, but it was not actually new, because this doctrine had been understood and taught by the apostolic and post apostolic church.

As with the feasts, the understanding of this truth in the time of the end is a part of the restoration of “all things” that Jesus talked about. These truths were held by the early church, but were lost as the Catholic Church ascended to power during the 4th century C.E. and beyond. In the 14th century the reformation began the process of restoring all things.

In some circles, the feasts are considered new light and new

142 *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd Series, Volume I, Book V, Chapter XXIV, Sections 1 to 6, p 242*

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truth, however, by definition, they are not. The early Christian church already had an understanding of them as far as celebrating them and their typological meaning.

However, there are teachings in the feasts that are new. For example; some are studying how the festivals apply to our present understanding of the books of Daniel and Revelation. When the festival system is blended with the books of Daniel and Revelation, these two books become clearer, and new light is shed on our present understanding of them. The feasts can be seen throughout the books of Daniel and Revelation, when we understand this, these references have greater impact because we recognize that they are fulfillments of the festal calendar. It gives us a sense of timing for these events as well. This is something that may not have even been recognized by the writers of these two books, and therefore, may rightly be considered new light.

For Seventh-day Adventists, when a challenge with scripture arises, a common practice is to appeal to the writings of Ellen White to see if she wrote on the subject in question. This is where things become a bit confusing for us. She does not say specifically whether the feasts should be kept or not.

A scene well pleasing to God

I have not found anywhere that she interprets Colossians 2:14-17 as God nailing the feasts to the cross, and thus fulfilling their typology. Rather, she speaks very highly of these special seasons.

During the annual festivals, Israel experienced its greatest revivals. God designed the festivals as times of celebration and renewal. One such revival was recorded in the book of Nehemiah when he brought Israel together for the Feasts of Trumpets and Tabernacles. About this revival, Ellen White says,

“It would be a scene well pleasing to God and angels, would His professed followers in this generation unite, as did Israel of old in a solemn covenant to ‘observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our Lord, and his judgments and his statutes’.”¹⁴³

When I first started studying about the feasts I found the Acts 20:6 text, “*But we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread...*” Paul and Luke were in fact keeping the Feast of Unleavened Bread with the Philippian believers, however, the text does not clearly say that Paul was keeping the feast of Unleavened Bread—some suggest that the mention of the feast is not *evidence* that Paul was in fact keeping the feast.

Like any faithful Seventh-day Adventist I resorted to the writings of Ellen White for commentary on this text. I found an extremely important narrative on Paul’s stay in Philippi at this time. Ellen White writes in *The Acts of the Apostles* that on Paul’s second visit to Philippi he kept the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread with the Philippian believers. She says, “At Philippi Paul tarried to keep the Passover... The Philippians were the most loving and truehearted of the apostle’s converts, and during the eight days of the feast he enjoyed peaceful and happy communion with them.”¹⁴⁴

Although it is not clearly stated, these converts were likely made up of both Jews and Gentiles. She does confirm that the attendees were converts to Christianity.

To understand this better, we need to return to Paul’s first visit to Philippi as recorded in Acts 16, “*And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there.*”¹⁴⁵ It is very unlikely that

143 Ellen White, *Southern Worker*, June 7, 1904

144 Ellen White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp 390-391

145 Acts 16:13

there was a Jewish synagogue in that city; if there was they would have probably been meeting there. It is recorded in Scripture that when Paul entered a new city, the Jewish synagogue was where he went on the Sabbath.¹⁴⁶ This adds credence to the idea that the Philippian believers were predominantly Gentile.

As to be expected there was controversy over what Paul was teaching. However, his problems were not with the Jews at Philippi (probably because there was no real Jewish presence there). He was brought to the Roman magistrates under some very interesting but serious charges. *“And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, ‘These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city; and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe’.”*¹⁴⁷

Paul was seen as being Jewish by the Roman Magistrates, because the early Christian church in many respects was Jewish in its practices, it was not yet acknowledged as being separate by the Romans. The practices and customs of the early Christian church seemed Jewish to the Romans. I believe that from the fact that Paul was considered Jewish and that he was teaching *customs*, we can conclude that Paul was teaching Jewish “*customs which are not lawful*” for “*Romans to receive or observe*”. This text clearly indicates that Paul was accused of teaching Jewish customs to the Romans (Gentiles), an accusation which he does not deny.

God’s word combined with reason is telling us that on Paul’s first journey to Philippi he was teaching customs which the Romans understood to be Jewish customs. Which Jewish customs (plural) was he teaching? One was Sabbath observance, *“And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made.”*¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ See Acts 13:42, 44

¹⁴⁷ Acts 16:21

¹⁴⁸ Acts 16:13

For the rest of the answer as to which customs he was teaching we turn to Acts 20:6. Here we see that Paul, now on his second journey to Philippi, was keeping the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread with the Philippian believers. We can come to no other conclusion than that Paul, on his first journey to Philippi, was teaching customs of which the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread were a part, because on his second journey he is keeping it with them.

My question is: Why are Paul (Jew) and Luke (Gentile) keeping the eight-day feast with newly converted Christians? Surely they were not keeping the feast to explain that it was no longer to be kept, especially when God gave the feasts to His people for the purpose of “peaceful and happy communion”.

Paul was teaching the celebration of the feasts of the Lord as recorded in Leviticus 23, but now, after the cross, the feasts were set in a Christian context. In the case of the Passover, when we keep it we are showing and declaring that “...*Christ, our Passover was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast...*”¹⁴⁹ If the Passover was commemorative for Paul—a Jew, and Luke—a Gentile, should it not be for us as well?

Should we (Seventh-day Adventists) not follow this custom as taught by the Apostle Paul? If our faith and practice is based on God’s Word alone, we must reconnect with these Scriptures and adjust our faith and practice if necessary.

If the Acts 15 Council is to be proof that the feasts are no longer to be kept, then Paul missed the whole point of that council. He not only continued to keep the feasts himself but he taught them to his converts to Christianity.

Ellen White was fully aware of Paul’s keeping of the feast with

149 1 Corinthians 5: 7, 8

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Gentile converts to Christianity, yet she does not indicate in any way that Paul was doing something that he should not have done. If she felt it was wrong for a Christian to be keeping the feasts, she surely would have said so.

Have we changed our position in the last hundred years? While Ellen White remained silent on this specific matter of whether their practice was right or wrong, she approves of Paul's keeping the feast, mentioning that it was a "peaceful and happy communion".

Ellen White comments on page 405 of *The Acts of the Apostles*, about Paul shaving his head and making a vow, which is recorded by Luke in the book of Acts 21:23-24:

"Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow. Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law."

Ellen White actually corrects Paul by saying, "he was not authorized by God to concede as much as they asked." This account is just fourteen pages after she records Paul and Luke keeping the feast of Unleavened Bread with the Philippian converts.

Ellen White clearly points out this error and other shortcomings when she believed the prophets made mistakes. If she felt Paul was wrong to keep the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread with the Philippian converts because they were no longer applicable, or were even an insult to God, surely she would have said so!

Ellen White has a chapter in her book, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, entitled "The Annual Feasts" in which she speaks highly of the

feasts, stating their benefits, all of which we could benefit from today.

“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. Well would it be for the people of God at the present time to have a Feast of Tabernacles—a joyous commemoration of the blessing 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* [the Festivals being one] 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.”¹⁵⁰

In this chapter Ellen White covers the purposes for which God gave the festival system to His people and not once does she indicate the feasts are no longer to be celebrated.

Ellen White realized the tremendous blessings Israel gained by observing the feasts. The record of the days of Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon, Hezekiah, Josiah, and Nehemiah attest to the revitalization of Israel through and during the festival gatherings.

Truth has been continually unfolding since the beginning of time—bringing present truth to each generation. I believe that in encouraging His followers to re-establish the celebration of His Festivals, the Lord is lifting His hand in these last days to open before us another fold in the fabric of truth. Celebrating the

150 Ellen White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp 540, 541

feasts will bring us closer to Him and to each other, help us better understand the plan of salvation, and bring substance and reality to our faith.

There is an Ellen White statement on page 652 in her book *The Desire of Ages* that is often referenced to prove the Passover and feasts have been done away with:

“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.”

Before we investigate this quotation, I would like to point out a few problems we encounter when we try to prove our teachings from the writings of Ellen White. Most importantly, if we use Ellen White to prove even one position which we hold that cannot be clearly established from Scripture, it will cause at least two monumental challenges to our outreach. First, it will be necessary to have people believe in Ellen White before they can hear the whole counsel of God. Second, we will run the risk of being lumped in with other faiths that have more than one source of authority.

Ellen White heartily subscribed to the cry of the reformation: “The Bible and the Bible only”. She believed her writings were less than the Bible and continually pointed to the Bible. She never told people to test doctrine by the use of her writings; her comment

was always, what does the Bible say?

“I request that my writings shall not be used as the leading argument to settle questions over which there is now so much controversy. I entreat of Elders Haskel, Loughborough, Smith, and others of our leading brethren, that they make no reference to my writings to sustain their views of the “daily.”

This statement was made by Ellen White on July 31, 1910 and used in the book *The Later Elmshaven Years*, written by her grandson Arthur L. White. This statement in its context will be used in this chapter as an example of a challenge that came to the church in her day and how she responded to it. I believe if she were alive today she would respond to this present situation involving the feasts in much the same way.

“When a brother receives new light upon the Scriptures, he should frankly explain his position, and every minister should *search the Scriptures* with the spirit of candor to see if the points presented can be substantiated by the inspired word.”¹⁵¹

Her desire was to prove all things by the Word of God. For this reason, I do not use Ellen White quotations to prove any position of Scripture. Ellen White did not clarify or even understand every point of scripture, and she was well aware of that fact.

Another problem we can encounter is that we may find ourselves using her statements to prove a position for which she did not intend. This was being done even before she died, and she was not happy about it.

In the early 1900's there was considerable controversy among

151 Ellen White, *Testimony to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp 30, 31; *A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White*, p 204

the leadership of the church regarding the “daily” mentioned in Daniel 8: 11, 12, 13; 11:31; 12:11. Even to this day there are differing opinions as to exactly what it is that is referred to as the “daily sacrifice” of Daniel 8, 10, 11 and 12. “During the General Conference session in Washington in 1909, there surfaced signals of potential doctrinal controversy in which the “daily” of Daniel 8 largely figured”.¹⁵²

Our purpose here is not to explore the interpretation of what the “daily” means but to see how Ellen White defused the bomb that was about to detonate. This situation left such an impression on the mind of Arthur White that he saw fit to dedicate one chapter (sixteen pages) in the last of his five volume series on the life of his grandmother, Ellen White.

Many of the top personnel in the church were involved in one way or another in this discussion. Ellen White had made statements regarding the “daily” in some of her publications in the past which the brethren were using to support their views.

“On August 28, 1908, almost two months after writing to W. W. Prescott¹⁵³, she wrote to Elder S. N. Haskell¹⁵⁴, a stalwart advocate of the old view [of the daily]. Because Ellen White in *Early Writings*

¹⁵²Arthur L. White, *The Later Elmshaven Years, 1905-1915*. Arthur was the son of William C. White and grandson of Ellen White.

¹⁵³Prescott, William Warren (1855-1944). Seventh-day Adventist educator and administrator. During the time of the above mentioned he was vice-president of the General Conference and chairman of the Review and Herald Publishing Association board, and editor of the *Review and Herald*.

¹⁵⁴Haskell, Stephen Nelson (1833-1922). Seventh-day Adventist evangelist and administrator. During the time of the above mentioned he was serving in the capacity of conducting a series of Bible training schools and evangelistic series in Tennessee and California, and served as president of the California Conferences (1908-1911).

had made reference to “the 1843 chart” in connection with a mention of the daily, Haskell had arranged for the publication of a facsimile copy of the chart and was circulating it.”¹⁵⁵

Her bottom line counsel on this subject was for them to leave it alone because she had “no special light on the point presented for discussion... There are different opinions regarding the “daily” and there will continue to be. If the Lord has seen fit to let this matter rest for so many years without correcting the same, would it not be wisdom on your part to refrain from presenting your views concerning it?”¹⁵⁶

These men would not leave the matter alone, the controversy threatened to divide the leadership of the church down the middle. They, like any good Seventh-day Adventist sought her for light on the subject. Ellen White’s repeated statements that “I have no light on the point” (Letter 226, 1908) and “I am unable to define clearly the points that are questioned” (Letter 250, 1908) and her inability to make a definite statement when the question was urged upon her, seemed to give support to their conclusion.”¹⁵⁷

“Ellen White watched with growing anxiety and distress the time-consuming controversy between leading brethren on an unimportant point and one on which she repeatedly said she had received no light. On July 31, 1910, she could restrain herself no longer. She took her pen and wrote:

I have words to speak to my brethren east and west, north and south. I request that my writings shall not be used as the leading argument to settle questions over which there is now so much controversy. I

155 Arthur L. White, *The Later Elmshaven Years, 1905-1915*, p 250

156 Ibid, p 249

157 Ibid, p 252

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entreat Elder Haskel, Loughborough¹⁵⁸, Smith¹⁵⁹, and others of our leading brethren, that they make no reference to my writings to sustain their views of the “daily”...

I cannot consent that any of my writings shall be taken as settling this matter...

I now ask that my ministering brethren shall not make use of my writings in their arguments regarding this question; for I have had no instruction on the point under discussion, and I see no need for the controversy.”¹⁶⁰

There was a larger issue that came to the mind of Ellen White’s son, W. C. White. He wrote, “I have told some of our brethren that I thought there were two questions connected with this [daily] matter that were of more importance than the decision which shall be made as to which is most nearly correct, the old or the new view regarding the “daily”. The first is: how shall we deal with one another when there is difference of opinion? Second: how shall we deal with Mother’s writings in our effort to settle doctrinal questions?”¹⁶¹

158 John Norton Loughborough (1832-1924) Pioneer evangelist and administrator. Served in many leadership positions, on the General Conference level as well as superintendent of several General Conference districts. Also held the presidency of a number of different Conferences. In 1907 he wrote a number of books, among them *The Church, Its Organization, Order, and Discipline* (1907) which for many years served in place of the church manual.

159 Uriah Smith (1832-1903) Editor and author who gave fifty years of service to the SDA cause. Served on and off as editor of the *Review and Herald* for many years and this role was given to him again in 1901.

160 Arthur L. White, *The Later Elmshaven Years, 1905-1915*, pp 257, 258

161 Arthur L. White, *The Later Elmshaven Years, 1905-1915*, p 261

I cannot but think that these two questions are also of utmost importance in regard to discussion surrounding the feasts of the Lord.

I am left wondering that if she were here today, what would Ellen White's counsel be to us? She might say, "make no reference to my writings to sustain your views on the feasts." I need to ask then, 'what writings are we to use to study this out?' I believe that her counsel today would mirror the counsel she so often gave:

"God reveals His will to us in His word, the Holy Scriptures.... If you are in doubt upon any subject you must *first* consult the Scriptures."¹⁶²

Every Divine Institution is to be Restored

However, because we need to come to grips with some of her statements concerning the feasts, we will look at a few of them.

"In the time of the end every divine institution is to be restored. The breach made in the law, at the time the Sabbath was changed by man, is to be repaired."¹⁶³

We need to closely examine this statement. What is meant by the phrase "every divine institution is to be restored?" The feasts were divine institutions. Earlier in *Prophets and Kings* we find her using this same term, however this time she directly connects the feasts as being divine institutions:

"Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah [on the fifteen day of the seventh

162 Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Volume 5, p 512

163 Ellen White, *Prophets and Kings*, p 678

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month—the Feast of Tabernacles]...The kings bold defiance of God in thus setting aside *divinely appointed institutions* was not allowed to pass unrebuked.”¹⁶⁴

The feasts are divine institutions that were changed “at the time the Sabbath was changed by man.” Does this mean they will be restored?

If one had asked Ellen White one hundred years ago if her statement in *Prophets and Kings* included the festivals she would have answered it with “yes,” “no,” or “I do not know.” How can we know for sure? Some have taken the liberty to use her writings to justify their position even though her statements are not definitive and were not necessarily written to support the position in which they are being used today. If the keeping of the feasts was a subject of discussion in her day, I am sure she would have spoken clearly about it. It may be possible that she did not have a position on the subject of keeping the feasts. This could be why she did not make clear statements as to whether or not the feasts were done away with as she does the sacrificial system. This is why the only safe approach is to go directly to the Bible.

Glorious Truths

“There are glorious truths to come [future] before the people of God. Privileges and duties which they do not even suspect to be in the Bible will be [future] laid open before the followers of Christ [those who will go where Jesus leads them]. As they follow on in the path of humble obedience, doing God’s will, they will [future] know more and more of the oracles of

God, and be established in right doctrines.”¹⁶⁵

One thing is for sure, Ellen White is talking about a group of people that from her day would live in the future.

What are the privileges and duties she is talking about? Why didn't she tell us what they were? Did she even know what they were? Did she know, and not tell us because the church in her day was not ready to hear them?

Do you understand the problems we have when we try to prove a position using her writings? Who is this group of people she refers to as “the people of God?” Are they Seventh-day Adventists or Christians in general? I believe by the context of the whole article, she is referring to Seventh-day Adventist believers who have accepted the restoration message. If this is the case then there are “privileges and duties which” we “do not even suspect to be in the Bible.” She is stating that there are “privileges and duties” to be opened to us that we do not realize or suspect to be in the Bible.

I believe that because the feasts were lost sight of in the wake of the dark ages, it is possible that the feasts could very well qualify as some of those privileges and duties that will be restored in the “time of the end”?

Does this quote prove the feasts should be kept? Absolutely not, but they definitely could qualify as “privileges and duties” that we “do not even suspect to be the Bible” for us.

Truths Still to be Added

There is another statement that should not go unnoticed. “There are old, yet new truths still to be added to the treasures of our

165 Ellen White, 1888 *Materials of Ellen White*, p 333

122 *Restoration of God's Festivals*

knowledge.”¹⁶⁶ Old truths (from the Bible) that are new to those who discover them will be (in the future) added to the church. While this quote does not prove the feasts should be kept today, they certainly could qualify given that they are old truths, but new to those who discover them today.

“Sharp, clear perceptions of truth will never be the reward of indolence. Investigation of every point that has been received as truth will richly repay the searcher; he will find precious gems. And in closely investigating every jot and tittle which we think is established truth, in comparing scripture with scripture, we may discover errors in our interpretation of Scripture. Christ would have the searcher of His Word sink the shaft deeper into the mines of truth. If the search is properly conducted, jewels of inestimable value will be found. The Word of God is the mine of the unsearchable riches of Christ.”¹⁶⁷

Sharp, clear perceptions of truth will never be the reward of indolence. Synonyms for indolence include: laziness, lethargic, idleness, sloth, sluggishness.

Investigation of every point that has been received as truth will richly repay the searcher; [there is a rich blessing for those who personally check out every point that has been received as truth]; he will find [this is not a might find, but a will find] precious gems. And in closely investigating every jot and tittle which we think is established truth, in comparing scripture with scripture, we may discover errors [therefore the question begs to be asked—have

166 *Review and Herald*, Feb 25, 1890

167 *Review and Herald*, July 12, 1898, paragraphs 10-15

we accepted errors?]) in our interpretation of Scripture [in other words, make sure what you believe is true because it “may” not be]. Christ would have the searcher of his Word sink the shaft deeper into the mines of truth. If the search is properly conducted, jewels of inestimable value will be found [here again, this is not a “might find jewels” but will “find jewels of inestimable value”. Why are they of inestimable value? Could it be possible that these jewels correct “errors in our interpretation of Scripture”? Do not rule it out: the quotation suggests this possibility. If you believed something to be true but it could be demonstrated that it was actually false, what is more valuable to you: truth or error. Truth when contrasted with error makes truth all the more valuable—inestimable value.] *The Word of God* [she plainly states that our focus needs to be God’s Word] is the mine of the unsearchable riches of Christ.”¹⁶⁸

This is an amazing quotation. I have had a personal experience with the principle in this quotation. About twenty years ago I went through a crisis in my Seventh-day Adventist experience (seven years after my conversion to Adventism). This drove me to do the very thing she suggests: investigate “every point that” I had “received as truth.”

She goes on in the quotation to say that the searcher will find precious gems, and “may discover errors in our interpretation of Scripture.” I am disappointed to say that some of what I had accepted, believed, and taught to others was not entirely correct.

This journey in discovering old, yet new truths has been filled with amazement and apprehension. I have learned to be careful

168 *Review and Herald*, July 12, 1898 paragraphs 10-15

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about putting my feet in concrete without first thoroughly checking its strength. I have learned to always keep my mind open to the idea that I may be wrong.

Along my journey, I have met many others who have discovered these same truths through their own personal investigation. This has been an encouragement to me. Most of the people that oppose these new, yet old, truths are not willing to even consider that they may be wrong on any point in which they believe. This is the same experience and mistake the Jewish leaders made in the time of Christ. "They would not admit even the possibility that they themselves did not rightly understand the Word, or that they had misinterpreted or misapplied the Scriptures."¹⁶⁹

We must realize that we do not fully understand the Bible, and be willing to accept new light and new truth or old light that is new to us.

His great sacrifice does away with blood sacrifice forever

Now let's get back to Ellen White's statement on page 652 in *The Desire of Ages*, which has caused some confusion because of the apparent contradictions it contains. We will take it apart piece by piece to try to understand what her point was in the statement. Here it is again:

"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.

169 Ellen White, *The Acts of Apostles*, p 79

As He ate the Passover [lamb] with His disciples,
He instituted in its [the lamb's] 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.”¹⁷⁰

Some conclude from this statement that a Passover kept in a Christian context is not to be done, whereas I would suggest that her message refers strictly to the sacrifice of the Passover lamb and the round of ceremonies that surrounded it. This statement does not imply discontinuing other feasts and festivals, which she would certainly have further described, as was typical of her writing.

Her purpose in writing this statement was to show that the Passover in the context of Judaism was to be done away with forever. The yearlong preparation of the lambs for sale, the procession into Jerusalem on the tenth day of the first month, the slaying of the Passover lambs at the temple, the eating of the lamb during the Passover meal, etc. “was to pass away forever”. A whole economy revolved around the sacrificial system. Jesus cleansed the temple of priests and sacrifices twice—once at the beginning of His ministry and once at the end. Why? The Jews had turned the sacrificial system and the sanctuary into a means to prosper.

The message from the sanctuary in Christ's day was, “Come buy your sacrifice and be saved.” This was no different than the Catholic system that would follow in its steps. Salvation had become something to be purchased. It is no wonder that Jesus cleansed the temple not once, but twice. The gift of salvation was not available to the common people. In order to receive it they must not only

170 Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p 652

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bow to the leaders but also they must purchase their provision for salvation, in the blood of their lambs. This is why in *The Desire of Ages* Ellen White declares that “The whole system must be swept away”.¹⁷¹

God had to sweep the whole system away for two primary reasons. First, those who were in charge of the system would not accept Jesus as their sacrifice and the long-awaited Messiah. Therefore, Ellen White states: “God could do no more for man through these channels.”¹⁷² The sacrifice of Jesus (the Lamb of God) was the fulfillment (the anti-type) of the sacrificial system (the type).

Second, the economic system of the temple revolved around and prospered from the sale of sacrifices and the priesthood had departed from the simple message of the gospel—salvation through grace and not works. The system could not be reformed because the ones who directed it would not reform. That is why she wrote that “the whole system must be swept away.” Does this mean that God no longer had a people? No, in fact, Paul, in Romans 11, refers to God’s New Testament church as “Israel”. In Galatians he says, “*if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise.*”¹⁷³ Yes, God still has a people and they are considered by Him to be Israel.

Abraham is rightly considered the father of the Jewish nation. We become the seed of Abraham upon accepting Christ and that makes us part of Israel through adoption. In Ephesians 2 Paul puts it another way: “*Once Gentiles in the flesh ...you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel ...But now in Christ Jesus you who once*

171 Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p 36

172 Ibid

173 Galatians 3:29

were far off have been made near by the blood of Christ.”¹⁷⁴

Paul declares that the Gentiles become part of Israel through Christ and are no longer “*aliens from the commonwealth of Israel*”.

The New Testament church was still Jewish and the Gentile converts became members of it. The Institution of the God-given Biblical religion did not change at the death of Christ. Within the framework of the Biblical religion, God instituted the appointed times as occasions for Him to intimately connect with His people.

As we have seen from Scripture alone, it appears that the New Testament church continued to celebrate the feasts through to the close of the Biblical record. Scripture contains no change in this regard. Furthermore, in searching historical documents of the post apostolic times we will find that the feasts continued to be a part of worship practice, following the example the Apostles left as recorded in Scripture.

Ellen White is not making a blanket statement about the feasts in this passage from *The Desire of Ages*. She is saying that God could no longer work through the Jews as led by their priests and their leaders because they were in it for their own glory and the money. What God was about to do to the Jews should have been no surprise to them. In Matthew 21:23-46, Jesus was conversing with the Jewish leaders. He asked them what the owner of the vineyard would do to the vinedressers who killed those who were sent to them and who eventually killed the son of the landowner. They sealed their destiny by their own response: “*They said to Him: ‘He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons.’*”¹⁷⁵

The Jewish apostles became the new vinedressers. God did not

174 Ephesians 2: 11-13

175 Matthew 21:41

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do away with the religion that He gave to His people. He did away with the unfaithful leaders of His people, and because those leaders were in control of the temple and all that was involved with it He had no choice but that “The whole system must be swept away.” Was the Jewish Biblical faith done away with? No, only those who led it, God could no longer work through them because they rejected His method of salvation—the Lamb of God. Because of this, and the fact that the sacrificial system had met its fulfillment, it was finished, God could no longer work through these lines.

The Passover was considered to be a festival which spanned an eight day period; from the fourteenth to the twenty-first of the first month of the Biblical year. According to *The Desire of Ages*’ quotation “the system of types and ceremonies that for four thousand years had pointed to His death” was to come to an end.

She says that the things that were done away with had been practiced for “four thousand years”. Are those who would use this statement as evidence against celebrating the festivals willing to suggest that the Passover had been kept since the fall of man—“four thousand years?” This would mean the Passover was given to Adam and Eve then passed on to their descendants who were not Jews. If this was the case, then it was not a Jewish festival which is clearly implied in Leviticus 23:4—they are called “*the feasts of the LORD*” and not the feasts of the Jews.

The Desire of Ages’ quotation, at best, refers only to the Jewish sacrificial system (at Passover) and not to all of the LORD’s feasts as some want to infer.

Ellen White is specifically saying that the “types and ceremonies that for four thousand years had pointed to His death...were to “pass away forever”. According to Jesus the ultimate fulfillment of

the Passover will be celebrated and “fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.”¹⁷⁶

Therefore we cannot say the Passover has passed away forever. If we interpret this statement as saying the Passover was to pass away forever at the Last Supper or His death, then Ellen White is in direct conflict with Jesus who said the Passover will be celebrated and “fulfilled in the Kingdom of God”.¹⁷⁷ If we read this statement correctly in *The Desire of Ages* I do not believe she is in conflict with what Jesus is saying in Luke 22:16.

Ellen White was stating that it was strictly the symbols that had been done for four thousand years—the specific symbols that pointed to His death, that were to “pass away forever.” There were many symbols contained in the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy such as the sacrificial lamb, other animal sacrifices, turtle doves, etc. and grain offerings, all these passed away at the death of our Savior.

The main purpose of the Second Coming festival types was, and is, not to portray the death of Christ. Pentecost, the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles were, and are, typical of Second Coming events such as the outpouring of the latter rain, the judgment, the close of probation, and the ingathering of the earth.

Therefore, there is still a purpose for celebrating and observing them. By celebrating them, we will have a better understanding of the fulfillments that are ahead of us.

The structure of *The Desire of Ages* quotation is interesting and I only wish that Ellen White were here so that we might ask her to help us with a clearer understanding. She states that the “great” Passover festival of the Jews was replaced by the “service

¹⁷⁶ Luke 22:16

¹⁷⁷ Ibid

that was to be the memorial of His great sacrifice”—the Christian festival of Communion. If we are comparing the festival of the Jewish Passover (an eight day feast) with that of the “great” Christian festival of Communion, there is hardly a comparison at all. Can we really compare an eight day feast with a service that in most Seventh-day Adventist churches takes about forty-five minutes? There is one main point in this quotation that we need to understand. She states: “As He ate the Passover [lamb] with His disciples, He instituted in its [the lamb’s] place the service that was to be the memorial of His great sacrifice” [unleavened bread and wine].¹⁷⁸ I believe what she is saying is that the lamb is no longer to be sacrificed and eaten at the Passover, and that the unleavened bread and wine take its place.

The statement says that He exchanged the lamb (type), which for four thousand years had pointed to His death (reality), with the new symbols of the unleavened bread and wine. This was the great exchange: the eating of the sacrificial lamb was replaced by the unleavened bread and the wine. For four thousand years the lambs had been slain; Jesus died when God’s festal clock struck the appointed time of the sacrifice, fulfilling the sacrificial system. The sacrificial system became obsolete at his death.

At the second of Jesus’ death, there were two lives that were immediately spared; the thief on the cross received eternal salvation that day, and the life of the sacrificial lamb at the temple was saved as it fled from the priest when the great earthquake shook the knife from his hand. This signified that the “*Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world*”¹⁷⁹ had died and the sacrificial “system of types and ceremonies that for four thousand years had pointed to His death” had “passed away forever”.¹⁸⁰

178 Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p 652

179 John 1:29

180 Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p 652

The *sacrificial system* was now “passed away forever” from the system that God instituted. The slaying of the lambs and all that was involved with that process had passed away forever. Jesus did not do away with the eight day festival but solely with the lamb and all that was involved with it. The Lamb of God had been slain; thus fulfilling the animal sacrificial system.

The Christian Passover, as Christ instituted it with its new symbols (unleavened bread and wine), was to take the place of the Jewish Passover with its symbols (the lamb) and “*was to be observed by His followers in all lands and through all ages.*”¹⁸¹ Therefore, when Paul and Luke in Acts 20:6 are keeping the Feast of Unleavened Bread in Philippi they are doing exactly what they should have been doing—keeping a Christ-centered eight day Christian Passover festival at its appointed time as Jesus instituted it. Notice Paul’s words:

1 Corinthians 11:24, 25

And when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body, which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’ In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.’

Now we have two great festivals: one Christian and one Jewish. The Christian eight day Passover festival that Paul kept and taught, and the eight day Jewish Passover festival as discarded by Paul. Paul was in perfect harmony with this quotation in *The Desire of Ages* on page 652.

In summary, this Ellen White quotation from *The Desire of Ages* should not be used by either side of the festival issue because it does not prove either position clearly, because it was not written for that purpose. It does, however, agree with Scriptures in that

181 Ibid

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the Passover with its rights and ceremonies as celebrated by the Jews, complete with the sacrificial lamb, has passed away forever at the death of Christ.

Where Ellen White is somewhat unclear in this quote, she asserts in *The Acts of the Apostles* (pp 390-391) that Paul was correct in keeping the Passover in Philippi—in a Christian context “in all lands through all ages”. Should we not continue to follow his example?

In summary, I do not see anything in this statement to suggest that we should not keep the Christ-centered eight day Christian Passover as celebrated and taught by Paul.

Thirteen

Contemporary Adventist Scholar

Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi

It has been twenty years since I discovered the truths about the feasts. When I heard that Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi¹⁸², one of the most prominent scholars of the church wrote two books on the feasts, I was excited. I know of many people who have read these books and seen light in them. Sixteen years have gone by since he stated in the book that he was running into people at all his meetings who had not only been studying about the feasts but also keeping them. This movement is definitely growing.

Early church history provides the evidence that changes to these divine institutions began to take place late in the second century. In 1977, Seventh-day Adventist scholar Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi published *From Sabbath to Sunday: A Historical Investigation of the Rise of Sunday Observance in Early Christianity*, documenting the historical transition from the Saturday Sabbath to Sunday in the early Christian church due to social, pagan and political factors.

In 1995 as Dr. Bacchiocchi studied deeper into this subject, he discovered more changes than just the weekly Sabbath. In his previous studies he had not picked up on the change of the

182 Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, 1938-2008

134 *Restoration of God's Festivals*

festivals. In 1995 he began writing his first of two books on the festivals.¹⁸³ Within these books he cites some historical writings that indicate the early and post Apostolic church continued to celebrate the festivals as part of their worship experience centuries after the death of Jesus. The following is one of many examples that could be cited.

“Several documents of the second century clearly attest that Christians observed Passover in accordance with the apostolic tradition.

“We have found that Christians celebrated Passover at the same time as Jewish Passover, beginning at sundown on Nisan 14 . . . For this reason, they are called “Quartodecimans.” The Latin for “fourteeners....” They read and expanded the Passover story in Exodus 12, applying it to the suffering and death of Jesus. ...A clear indication of the importance of Passover in the religious life of the early Church is the controversy which flared up in the second century over the date for celebrating Passover. We noted that this major controversy in the latter half of the second century threatened to split Christian churches.

“The two protagonists of the controversy were Bishop Victor of Rome (189-199 CE) and Bishop Polycrates of Ephesus. Bishop Victor championed the observance of Passover on the Sunday following the date of the Jewish Passover (Easter-Sunday). He tried to enforce the adoption of this date on the

183Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, *God's Festivals in Scripture and History Part 1-The Spring Festivals*, and the second, *God's Festivals in Scripture and History Part 2 -The Fall Festivals*.

Christian church at large.

“Bishop Polycrates of Ephesus and the leaders of the Asian churches strongly advocated the traditional Passover date of Nisan 14, transmitted to them by the Apostles Philip and John. They refused to be frightened into submission by the threats of Victor of Rome and eventually were excommunicated by the Roman bishop.”¹⁸⁴

As Solomon stated, “*That which has been is what will be, that which is done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun.*”¹⁸⁵ The changing of divine institutions had been done in the past to gain and maintain control over people.¹⁸⁶ Why would we not expect Satan to inspire the church leaders to use the same tactic again?

It appears that at the time the Sabbath was changed by man the breach made in the law included more than we first thought, and continuing the repairing of this breach is happening now but is not yet complete. This restoration of truth indicates that we are truly living in the time of the end. The finishing touches of the restoration and repairing are being done as you are reading this book. God is on the move.

I spoke with Dr. Bacchiocchi on a number of occasions about these two books. He shared with me that the reason he wrote them was because of,

“The action taken early in 1995 by leadership of the Worldwide Church of God to make the Sabbath, the annual Feasts, and tithing part of the Old Covenant legislation, and consequently no longer obligatory for

184 Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, *God's Festivals in Scripture and History*
Part 1- *The Spring Festivals*, pp 126, 127

185 Ecclesiastes 1:9

186 Story of Jeroboam; 1 Kings 12:26-33

136 *Restoration of God's Festivals*

Christians today.”¹⁸⁷

It was during this time that he was asked by John Merritt, MD, Medical Director of the Laguna Hill Hospital and a former board member of Ambassador University—an institution of the Worldwide Church of God¹⁸⁸ to speak at an upcoming conference about the Sabbath, showing its validity for the Christian today.

“During the convention Dr. Merritt asked me if I would speak also on the annual Feasts. The request caught me by surprise for two reasons. First, I was not prepared to speak on this subject, which I had not adequately investigated. Second, I have argued in my book *The Sabbath in the New Testament* that the Feasts of Israel were part of the ceremonial services of the Temple that came to an end with the sacrifice of Christ at the cross. I felt that presenting such a view publicly would only alienate those who had come seeking for a word of reassurance on the continuity of the Feasts. For these reasons I declined to speak on the subject.

“Dr. Merritt did not give up on me. He encouraged me to pursue the study of the Feasts and offered me the opportunity to share my conclusions at a similar convention to be held at the end of December, 1995, in San Antonio, Texas. I accepted the challenge, fearing, however, that my conclusions would prove to be disappointing to those Christians who believed in the continuity and value of the Biblical Feasts. Being free from teaching commitments at Andrews

187Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, *God's Festivals in Scripture and History. Volume I: The Spring Festivals*, p 10

188 Ibid

University from June to December 1995, I devoted every spare moment of these seven months to writing the book

“This research has been full of surprising discoveries for me. A first surprise was to find considerable interest in the relevance of Israel’s Feasts for Christians, not only among Messianic Jews who wish to retain their Jewish religious heritage, but also among those Christians who wish to rediscover their Jewish roots. ...

“A second surprise was to find a significant interest in the Feasts of Israel among Adventist members and scholars. In every church in which I presented my seminars during the latter half of 1995, I met some fellow believers who had been studying, and in some cases observing privately the annual Feasts. Similarly, at Andrews University I found several colleagues keenly interested in the study of the Feasts. In fact, some of them have been observing the Feasts privately. ...

“A third surprise was to find supportive statements for the Feasts in the writings of Ellen White, co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. For example, she comments on Acts 20:6 *“We sailed away from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread”*, “at Philippi Paul tarried to keep the Passover. . . . The Philippians were the most loving and truehearted of the apostle’s converts, and during the eight days of the feast he enjoyed peaceful and happy communion with them.”

“A fourth surprise was to discover that I was wrong

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in assuming that the annual Feasts came to an end with the sacrifice of Christ, simply because they were connected with the sacrificial system of the Temple. I came to realize that the continuity or discontinuity of the Feasts is determined not by their connection with the sacrificial system, but by the scope of their typology. If the Feasts had typified only the redemptive accomplishments of Christ's first Advent, then obviously their function would have terminated at the Cross. But, if the Feasts foreshadow also the consummation of redemption to be accomplished by Christ at His second Advent, then their function continues in the Christian church, though with a new meaning and manner of observance.”¹⁸⁹

Over the years Samuele Bacchiocchi has taken some criticism over these two books, mostly because he dared to take a stand on a controversial matter, albeit a well-researched stand. This did not dissuade him from pursuing the truth on this subject.

Standing for truth was nothing new for this man; he was well acquainted with its cost. Having grown up as a Sabbath keeper in a Catholic country where anti-Semitism runs deep was a challenge to say the least.

189Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, *God's Festivals in Scripture and History. Volume 1: The Spring Festivals*, pp 12-13

fourteen

Celebrating the Holy Days, not Holidays

It should come as no surprise that, just as the true Sabbath was lost sight of for nearly 1,500 years, the feasts were also almost totally abandoned during this period of history. As the Sabbath was substituted by a counterfeit Sabbath in Sunday, we find that the Holy Days were replaced by counterfeit holy days such as Christmas and Easter.

One of the main problems with Christmas and Easter is that their origins are entirely pagan. The symbols used for these festivals include Easter bunnies, hot cross buns, and sun discs seen above the head of Jesus on crucifixes and manger scenes. The sun disc is also used on the statues of Jesus, the Apostles, and Mary. In order to Christianize the pagan deities, certain pagan statues (Ishtar, alias Astarte and Ashtoreth—goddess of the Sidions¹⁹⁰ and sometimes called the queen of heaven) were turned into Mary, the mother of Jesus. These two festivals—Christmas and Easter—blend paganism and Christianity.

Consider the Bible record of what happened to Israel when they blended God-given worship and pagan worship practices; the outcome was never positive. We must be careful about keeping any festival/holiday that is a mixture of truth and error, especially if it

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involves worship. The end result will be disastrous, as it was with Israel.

What should be especially concerning is that the timing of Christmas and Easter is according to the original pagan festivals. This exactly parallels the relationship of Sunday and Sabbath—Sunday worship was originally a pagan institution¹⁹¹ that adopted Christian ideologies. But notice, the timing of the pagan institution of Sunday was kept after the blend. This is identical to what happened with the institutions of Christmas and Easter—after the blending, the pagan timing was kept. The purpose of this maneuver by the enemy of God in changing the appointed times of worship was to break God's appointments that He had made with His people

From Islam's Hajj and Festival of Sacrifice in Mecca to the Mardi Gras in New Orleans, whether religious or secular, the peoples of the world have created their festivals to fill a divinely planted need to worship, celebrate, and commemorate with those of like mind.

John Adams, one of the authors of the American Declaration of Independence, stated at the time (1776), "I am apt to believe that (Independence Day) will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forever more."¹⁹²

One of the underlying purposes in all festivals whether secular or religious is to maintain and promote unity among

191 biblicalperspectives.com/books/sabbath_to_sunday/8.html

192 World Book Encyclopedia Volume 10, 1990

their participants. This is clearly seen in the Fourth of July Independence Day celebration in the United States, which marks victory over their oppressor (England) and a call for unity among the American people.

Passover is a celebration of our Messiah's victory over "the oppressor". The Passover is a call to accept the Ultimate Sacrifice, "*Christ our Passover, who was sacrificed for us.*"¹⁹³ The Feast of Unleavened Bread is also a call for purity and unity in Jesus as our Deliverer. "*Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*"¹⁹⁴

The Passover is the actual anniversary date that He ratified the covenant in His blood. On that Passover He became our Deliverer. This day will go down in the eternal history books as the day of our LORD'S victory. This is why Jesus has declared it as the opening celebration of the seven day Feast of Unleavened Bread. Can this ever be changed? He is now waiting to celebrate it with us in His kingdom when our victory in Him will be fulfilled and we are eternally safe and saved in His kingdom. "*I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.*"¹⁹⁵ He is longing for that day when He can eat it with us in His kingdom. Paul admonishes us "*For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.*"¹⁹⁶

Imagine for a moment, what would happen if the Independence Day celebration was either dropped from or relocated on the calendar? You might ask, "What would have to happen to drop

193 1 Corinthians 5:7

194 1 Corinthians 5:8

195 Luke 22:15, 16

196 1 Corinthians 11:26

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it from being celebrated?” A takeover of the United States by another power might bring that change. As we have already seen in Dr. Bacchiocchi’s book and Robert L. Odom’s work, God’s Festivals ceased when the early church was taken over by a foreign power—the Romans.

This dropping of the Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread brought a storm of protest against the Roman Church. Stern opposition came from the leaders of the Middle-eastern Christian churches that were born under the direction and instruction of the Apostles John, Peter, Phillip, Paul, and others whom they taught.

All of God’s Festivals are celebrations of our Savior’s victories: past, present, and future. Therefore, dropping or changing them in any way was not received lightly by those deeply rooted in early Christianity.

History reveals that when the early church gave up the Sabbath, it was primarily to distance itself from the Jews. They not only gave up the Sabbath but many have failed to notice in those same history books that they also gave up the observance of the other holy days and adopted the pagan holidays in their stead. The Catholic Church was instrumental in finishing this work.

Again let us look at the quote by Thomas Enright, who was a priest and the president of Redemptorist College (Roman Catholic) in Kansas City, as it is often used in Seventh-day Adventist evangelistic meetings. The last sentence (underlined) however will be new to most readers as it is always left out.

“I have offered and still offer \$1000 to anyone who can prove to me from the Bible alone that I am bound, under grievous sin to keep Sunday holy.
It was the Catholic Church, which made the law

obliging us to keep Sunday holy. The Church made this law long after the Bible was written. Hence said law is not in the Bible. Christ, our Lord empowered his church to make laws binding in conscience. He said to his apostles and their lawful successors in the priesthood, *‘Whatever you shall bind on earth shall be binding in heaven.’*¹⁹⁷ The Catholic Church abolished not only the Sabbath, but all the other Jewish festivals.¹⁹⁸

Why has the last sentence of this letter in the past been left unspoken in our public meetings for evangelism? During the developmental stages of our evangelistic efforts, historical documents were gathered to further prove the teachings of the Bible. This quotation was one of those documents that seemed to nail down the role that the Catholic Church played in regard to the change of the Sabbath.

As Sabbath keepers searched through old documents they discovered the Thomas Enright letter and they considered it invaluable. What they were looking for was proof that the Catholic Church had changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and this is exactly what was found.

However, they also found an admission that the Catholic Church abolished all of God’s Festivals. But it is likely that the searchers were not looking for information regarding the change of God’s Festivals, therefore this gem remained hidden. The result is that this quote has been used by our well-meaning evangelists without them knowing that the sentence involving the feasts was missing.

197 Matthew 16:19 & 18:17; Luke 16:19

198 T. Enright CSSR, St. Alphonsus (Rock) Church, St. Louis, June 1905

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This is precisely how God works; one thing at a time, truth upon truth, over a long period of time.

In *Sabbath and Sunday In Early Christianity* by Robert L. Odom, we find another such example of God's timing.¹⁹⁹

In the Second Century section of his book, Robert Odom exposes the controversy between the Bishops of the western churches, in particular Rome, and the Bishops of Asia who were personally taught by the Apostles John and Philip. As the author exposes the conflict between the two groups, he brings into the picture the Passover feast (Pascha). Apparently this issue was central to the changing of the Sabbath to Sunday. In so doing, he brings to light things that have been hidden for the most part for nearly two millennia. He refers to some of the same people as Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, as quoted earlier in this chapter.

“Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, was among the most highly esteemed church leaders of the second century... Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons in Gaul in the latter half of the second century, tells us that in his youth he was personally acquainted with Polycarp and often heard him speak. He says, “Polycarp also was not only instructed by apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also, by the apostles in Asia appointed bishop of the church in Smyrna, ...having always taught the things which he had learned from the apostles, and which the church has handed down, and which alone are true.”²⁰⁰

“Another writer states it in this way: ‘At this time,

199 *Sabbath and Sunday In Early Christianity*, pp 118, 122

200 Odom cites “Irenaeus, Against Heresies”, Book III, Sec. 4, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. I*, p. 416. See also “Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History”, Book IV, Chapter XIV, Sections 1 and 4

while Anicetus was at the head of the church of Rome, Irenaeus relates that Polycarp, who was still alive, was at Rome, and that he had a conference with Anicetus on a question concerning the day of the paschal feast.²⁰¹

“Those early writers state specifically that the principle subject of discussion between Polycarp and Anicetus was the time—‘the day of the paschal feast...’

“Near the end of the second century Victor I, bishop of the church in Rome, demanded the excommunication of all Christians who refused to follow the Roman church in making Sunday the great day in the observance of the yearly ecclesiastical Pascha instead of the fourteenth day of the lunar month and whatever day of the week it should happen to be. This brought a storm of protest from the churches of the Province of Asia and their Bishops. Polycrates, veteran bishop of the church in Ephesus who had ‘lived sixty-five years in the Lord’, was the spokesman for the Asian bishops. He wrote to Victor:

“We observe the exact day: neither adding, nor taking away. For in Asia also great lights have fallen asleep, which shall rise again on the day of the Lord’s coming, when he shall come with glory from heaven, and shall seek out all the saints. Among these are Philip, one of the twelve apostles, who fell asleep in Hieropolis: and his two aged virgins daughters and

201 Odom cites “Eusebius”, op. cit., Book IV. Chapter XIV, Section 1, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd Series*, Volume I, p 187

another daughter, who lived in the Holy Spirit and now rests at Ephesus: and moreover, John, who was both a witness and a teacher, who reclined upon the bosom of the Lord, and, being a priest, wore the sacerdotal plate. He fell asleep at Ephesus. And Polycarp in Smyrna, who was a bishop and martyr... All these observed the fourteenth day of the Passover [Pascha] according to the Gospel, deviating in no respect, but following the rule of Faith.”²⁰²

In Robert Odom’s search for historical documents to support the Biblical teaching of the Sabbath he came into contact with additional information that would “in the time of the end” be used to advance the restoration of God’s festivals — “every divine institution”. It would seem that this Passover controversy in the early church did not click in Odom’s mind in connection with the change of the festivals by the Roman church. Why? Probably because it was the purpose of his work to show the change of the Sabbath to Sunday; he had accomplished what he had set out to do.

We need to look at the bigger picture. In the providence of God, truth has unfolded from age to age, generation to generation. Truth was added to truth, old ideas and misunderstanding, at times, had to be discarded. Many of the doctrines that the Seventh-day Adventist Church teaches today were gathered together over time in this manner.

For example, Sunday had been the accepted day of worship for over a thousand years. However, in the early nineteenth century, as the reformation of the church was gaining momentum through a growing knowledge of the Word, the providence of God, whose

202 Odom cites “Eusebius”, op. cit., Book V, Chapter XXIV, Section I to 6, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd Series*, Volume I, p 242

timing knows no haste or delay, led early Adventist pioneers to discover the Sabbath truth. This became a point of controversy for many but for those who wanted to do His will the promise was given: *"If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority."*²⁰³

The timing of Sabbath observance is also an example of this progression. In the early stages, it was believed the Sabbath should be observed from 6:00 pm. to 6:00 pm. This was eventually revised as new texts came to light, making it clear from their study of scripture that the new day actually began at sunset: *"...from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your Sabbath"*.²⁰⁴

There has always been an order in the reformation process. In the providence of God the Sabbath truth returned the law of God back to His people. The Protestant Reformation was a period of building blocks, putting truth upon truth over a long period of time. It appears the Reformation continues today.

Timely Unfolding of Truth

Restoration of the Law and the Presence of God was documented in 1 Samuel 4, when the Philistines captured the Ark of the Covenant from Israel. Verse 22 declares, *"The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God had been captured."* After seven months it was returned to Israel, *"the people of Beth Shemesh ...lifted up their eyes and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it."*²⁰⁵ Later, *"...David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet."*²⁰⁶

203 John 7:17

204 Leviticus 23:32

205 1 Samuel 6:13

206 2 Samuel 6:15

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The returning of the Ark to the people of God represented the restoration of the Law and the Presence of God.

When the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church discovered the Sabbath, the Law of God was given back—restored—to His people. The Sabbath needed to be set back into stone where it belonged. This restoration of the law was followed by the marked blessing of the Spirit of God in the gift of prophecy.²⁰⁷

Proverbs 29:18

Where there is no revelation [prophetic vision] the people cast off restraint: But happy is he who keeps the law.

Lamentations 2:9

...The law is no more, and her prophets find no vision from the LORD

Obedience to God's law was and is critical for the restoration of the Spirit of Prophecy. As we come into harmony with His will, He has a legal right to bestow this rich blessing upon His church.

This unfolding of truth to successive generations was understood by no one better than our Master. It was Jesus who said, "I still have many things to say to you but you cannot bear them now. However when He the Spirit of Truth has come, He will guide you into all truth..."²⁰⁸

You cannot lead people faster than they are willing or able to follow. God, in His infinite wisdom, has laid out the order of the unfolding of truth. Today, as we are approaching the closing work of the reformation, it is my firm belief that God, in His

207 The Seventh-day Adventist church accepts the writings of Ellen White as inspired by the Holy Spirit, and therefore are referred to, by the church, as writings that are inspired by the Spirit of Prophecy—the Holy Spirit.

208 John 16:12, 13

timing, is revealing yet another truth—His festivals in His grand revelation of restoring all things. As we have seen, Ellen White understood this concept of restoring truth in its time very well:

“There are glorious truths to come before the people of God. Privileges and duties which they do not even suspect to be in the Bible will be laid open before the followers of Christ. As they follow on in the path of humble obedience, doing God’s will, they will know more and more of the oracles of God, and be established in right doctrines.”²⁰⁹

We are currently standing at a crossroad. After years of prayer, study and reflection on this subject, I am convinced that the Lord is bringing to light things long forgotten and misunderstood that we “do not even suspect to be in the Bible”.

The Blessing of the Festivals is a Call to Order

During the annual festivals, Israel experienced its greatest revivals. God designed these festivals as times of celebration and renewal. One such revival was recorded in the book of Nehemiah when he brought Israel together for the Feasts of Trumpets and Tabernacles:

Nehemiah 8:1,2,17

Now all the people gathered together as one man... on the first day of the seventh month. ...So the whole congregation of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and sat under the booths; for since the days of Joshua the son of Nun until that day the children of Israel had not done so. And there was very great gladness.

Ellen White said of this revival,

209 Ellen White, *The Ellen White 1888 Materials*, p 114

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“It would be a scene well pleasing to God and angels, would His professed followers in this generation unite, as did Israel of old in a solemn covenant to ‘observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our Lord, and his judgments and his statutes’.”²¹⁰

During another such revival it is recorded:

2 Chronicles 30: 20-22, 26-27

And the LORD listened to Hezekiah and healed the people. So the children of Israel, who were present at Jerusalem, kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with great gladness; ...making confession to the LORD God of their fathers. ...So there was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the time of Solomon the son of David, King of Israel, there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem ...and their prayer came up to His Holy dwelling place, to heaven.

Luke records a similar event:

Acts 2:1,2

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven.

God designed these feasts to be spiritual blessings; can we afford to miss out on them?

Notice that in the following passage, the context demands that just before the coming of the Lord we are commanded by God through the prophet Malachi to remember the law, statutes, and judgments.

Malachi 4: 4-6

²¹⁰ *Southern Worker*, June 7, 1904

Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments, Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD ...Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.

The “Law of Moses” mentioned here, without question, includes the Ten Commandments. But please notice, special mention is given to the “statutes and judgments”. Why? Because they too, have been forgotten, hence the call to action “...Before the great and dreadful day of the LORD.” (This text in Malachi will be covered in greater detail in the section *The Elijah Message*.)

Matthew 17:11, referring to the prophecy of Malachi

Then Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Elijah truly is coming first and will restore all things’.

The “all things” Jesus was talking about must be referring to the commandments, statutes and judgments. There is a reason why He used the word “restore.” There are no blind spots with God. “In the time of the end” “the statutes and judgments” are in need of being restored. This would mean that they were lost for a period of time, which they have been. Therefore, in the process of the reformation, according to this text, just before the coming of the LORD, He will call His church to restore the statutes and judgments. These statutes and judgments are referred to in the book of the law as additional to the Ten Commandments.

Deuteronomy 6:1-3

Now this is the commandment, and these are the statutes and judgments which the LORD your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess, that you may fear the LORD your God to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I

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command you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe it, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you—‘a land flowing with milk and honey’.

By following the command of this text, ancient Israel was being prepared for the kingdom that they were about to possess. Just before Israel's entrance to their promised land the LORD spoke to Joshua to encourage him in his task of filling the void that Moses left,

Joshua 1:7-9

Only be strong and very courageous that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you, do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”

Do not miss this typical picture of ancient Israel's responsibility of obedience. The LORD's promise of His presence to help them as they were to enter their promised land was conditional upon their obedience to their covenant with God. This promise of His presence and His call to obedience was echoed by the LORD about 1400 years later in the person of Jesus Christ to the disciples—His new leaders,

Matthew 28: 19, 20

*'Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to **observe all things** that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'* Amen

Two thousand years later we, in modern Israel are knocking on the door of the ultimate Promised Land. We too have this same promise of God's continued presence. If we obey *all* that He has **commanded** us. One of our responses to God should be to show Him that we want to go home to His house by being obedient to all of His commands. Does God expect less of modern Israel than He did of ancient Israel?

Early Adventist Insight

Let us not forget our past. The early pioneers chose a feast day for the return of Jesus: The Day of Atonement, October 22, 1844. They had previously discovered that God operates on His festival calendar, this they had clearly seen in the first coming of the Messiah. Some of the typology in the spring festivals prefigured the death, burial, resurrection and first outpouring of the Holy Spirit. They saw that Jesus died on the very day and hour in which the Passover lamb for centuries had been slain. He also rose on the day of first fruits, again God kept to the festal calendar. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was done on festival time—Pentecost according to God's calendar.

Upon recognizing these truths the early Adventist pioneers chose a fall festival for the day of Jesus' return. Were they correct? Not quite, but they had discovered the truth about the festival calendar and the fulfillment of the Second Coming types. They opened a door that led to the sanctuary times and their fulfillments. They started a work that one day others would complete. An understanding of the typology of the appointed times, especially the fall festivals, makes it clear that they have not been fulfilled. This lost sanctuary was broken down and buried beneath the rubble of fable and tradition. Satan had done his work well when he

inspired an earthly power to “attempt to change the sacred seasons and the law.”²¹¹ He did away with the sanctuary times declaring that Jesus did away with them at his death on the cross even though Scripture declares that an earthly power and not Christ would do this. This is blasphemy in the truest sense of the word, declaring that God had done something when it was the work of His enemy.²¹²

Let us finish the work they began and complete the restoration of sanctuary times by clearing all the rubble and build on the foundation that our SDA pioneers located.

Psalm 77:13

Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary...

The message that proceeds from the sanctuary is God’s appointed means for the salvation of man. The festivals when understood correctly, direct our minds to the throne of God. Most of the festival types point to ultimate fulfillments that are still in the future. These things demand our study because “*the end of the ages has come*”²¹³ upon us.

211 NRSV: Daniel 7:25

212 “He shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper... (Daniel 11:36, also Revelation 13:5). In Matthew 12:22-30 Jesus is accused of doing the work of Satan when He was doing God’s work, Jesus called this accusation blasphemy. If the power in Daniel 7:25 changes the “times [festivals] and laws” then declares that it was Jesus that changed them, this by reason is blasphemy—declaring the work of Satan to God is blasphemy in its truest sense.

213 1 Corinthians 10:11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages have come.

The Call to Return to God

We, as Seventh-day Adventists, realize that a special message and work has been given to us. We call it “The Three Angels Message” and the “Elijah Message.” They are a summons to judgment and a call to return to true worship as God ordained it. These messages are really one and the same.

Message of the First Angel

Revelation 14:6

Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—saying with a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water’.

It would seem reasonable to conclude from the context of Revelation 13 and 14 that God through this angel messenger is calling the people of the world to recognize Him as the creator and judge of all mankind. Furthermore, this call is not only to recognize Him as creator and judge but to bring urgency to the call. The hour of His judgment has come—a very startling message indeed. Those who understand the festal calendar recognize this to be a direct reference to the Feast of Trumpets as the opening of Judgment. We also see in Revelation that those who have responded to this call to return to true worship also “*keep the commandments of God*”.²¹⁴

214 Revelation 14:12 *Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.*

The Elijah Message

The Elijah Message is also a call back to true worship and the Law of God. As we examine it we will see that it directly parallels Revelation's message of the three angels. If we are to know what the Elijah Message is, we must follow Elijah to the Old Testament to hear him speak.

1 Kings 17:1

And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, 'As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word.

Elijah was announcing a judgment on Israel by the LORD.

In 1 Kings 18 we find the reason why this judgment came upon Israel. There was a meeting between Elijah, the prophet of Israel and Ahab, the king of Israel. The king identified Elijah as the cause of the troubles of Israel, "...when Ahab saw Elijah ...Ahab said to him, 'Is that you, O troubler of Israel?'"²¹⁵ Elijah's response to the king was, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and you have followed Baals".²¹⁶ It is clear from this passage that forsaking the commandments of the LORD leads to following false Gods which in turn brings the judgment of the Most High.

We can see clearly that Elijah's message was a call to return to the commandments and worship of the true God. This is seen again in verse 21 (and following) in a showdown between Baal and his prophets and YHWH and His prophet, Elijah. Elijah challenges the prophets to this showdown, the day of reckoning had come.

²¹⁵ 1 King 18:17

²¹⁶ 1 King 18:18. *Baals* refers to false deities.

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1 Kings 18:21

And Elijah came to all the people, and said, 'How long will you falter between two opinions? If YHWH is God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him'.

Elijah gives the prophets of Baal first choice between the two bulls provided for the offering. He did this so that the false prophets would have no excuse that Elijah had a more perfect offering and therefore had an advantage. Elijah set the ground rules to which all the people agreed. To the false prophets he challenged,

1 Kings 18:24

'...you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of YHWH; and the God who answers by fire, He is God.' So all the people answered and said, 'It is well spoken.'

The false prophets of Baal had first opportunity to call upon their god. They called on their god all through the day, with no answer. Their chants turned to a frenzy as they “*cried aloud and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until blood gushed out on them*” as if they had become the sacrifice, and so they were about to be.²¹⁷

Elijah taunts them as they clearly find no answer to their prayers. Scripture declares that Elijah waited until God's appointed time of the evening offering was near (verse 36), a time when Elijah met with His God. The first thing that we are told is that Elijah began to repair “*the altar of the LORD that was broken down*”.²¹⁸

This repairing of the altar is symbolic of going back to true worship as God ordained it. We all, at times, need to repair our altars that have broken down. True worship always starts with us;

217 1 Kings 18:28

218 1 King 18:30

one on one with God. “Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob” and restored that worship centerpiece.²¹⁹ At the appointed time God answered Elijah’s prayer,

1 Kings 18:36-39

And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, ‘LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Let it be known this day that You are God in Israel, and that I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You are the LORD God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again. Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench, now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, ‘The LORD, He is God! The LORD He is God!’

It was now time for the main sacrifice of the day. “And Elijah said to them, ‘Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!’ So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there.”²²⁰ Judgment followed their unwillingness to follow the ways of the true God.

All things would be restored

1 Kings 8:57, 58

May the LORD our God be with us, as He was with our fathers, May He not leave us nor forsake us, that He may incline [turn] our hearts to Himself, to walk in all His ways,

219 1 Kings 18:31

220 1 Kings 18:40

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and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, which He commanded our fathers.

Turning our hearts to God includes coming back to His laws according to His Word. God knew that during the dark ages the Sabbath, as well as the statutes and judgments, would be forgotten and lost sight of. However, He knew that through the process of the reformation, *all things* would ultimately be restored.²²¹ And in His timing, which knows no haste or delay, the statutes and judgments would be the last thing to be restored; a final touch on the reformation process, if you will. “In the time of the end every divine institution is to be restored. The breach made in the law at the time the Sabbath was changed by man, is to be repaired.”²²²

This call to return to God is focused on worshiping at God’s appointed times of which the “daily” evening and morning worship is the starting place—*You shall be careful to offer to Me at their appointed time... one lamb you shall offer in the morning, the other lamb you shall offer in the evening.*²²³

We see the fulfillment of the morning and evening sacrifice in the true lamb of God most clearly in the Gospel of Mark 15:25. “Now it was the third hour (9:00 am), and they crucified Him.”

This was the time of the morning sacrifice. Just in case we missed the point Mark records the time of His death, “and at the ninth hour” (3:00 pm). This not only proves that Jesus was the Lamb of God, but that He is our “daily” Lamb of God. When we come to Him at His appointed hours of prayer we come to Him as our Lamb.

This is also seen in the book of Acts: “Now Peter and John were going

221 See Malachi 4:1-6

222 Ellen White, *Prophets and Kings*, p 678

223 Numbers 28:1, 2

*up to the temple at the time for prayer, at three o'clock in the afternoon.”*²²⁴

The fact that Luke says Peter and John went up at the hour of prayer shows that they still considered the ninth hour the hour of prayer. The words of Scripture are calculated to bring conviction to the heart that is seeking for truth. All true worship starts with our daily appointment with God. If there is no “daily” there is no true connection with the God of Heaven and Earth.

So the Elijah message includes returning to the LORD in true worship at His appointed times, for they are God’s ordained meeting times with His people. The Elijah message also includes a call to restore the Law of God of which the appointed times are a part.

A question begs to be asked, are “*the commandments of the LORD*” that Elijah is referring to in 1 Kings 18:18 only the Ten Commandments or does the phrase include more than that? In the past we have viewed the phrase as referring only to the Ten Commandments, however, this is not entirely correct. While the commandments in 1 Kings 18:18 undoubtedly included the Ten Commandments, as we will see in Malachi “the commandments of the LORD” that Elijah was referring to include also the statutes and judgments.

Matthew 17:11 links to Malachi 4:4-6

Jesus also gave us a clue in the book of Matthew in saying that “*Elijah truly is coming first and will restore all things.*”²²⁵ When we look at the message and work of Elijah we can conclude that his message was centered on a call back to the commandments of God and true worship as God ordained it. Therefore this restoring “all things”

224 Mark 15:25 (net.Bible.org)

225 Matthew 17:11

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must be in reference to worship and God's law.

Jesus' statement in Matthew 17 is a direct clue and link to the answer to our question: do the commandments spoken of by Elijah include more than the Ten Commandments? Jesus directly references Malachi's prophecy in Malachi 4. This prophecy is set in time as being fulfilled just before the Second Coming of our LORD.

Malachi 4:1-3

'For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up,' says the LORD 'that will leave them neither root nor branch. But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves. You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this,' says the LORD.

Malachi goes on to give a direct plea from the LORD Himself to, Malachi 4:4-6

Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.

Summing up the Elijah Message

This message is a stern message of judgment on those who do wickedly; they will be burned as stubble and left as ashes to be walked upon by the righteous who inherit the earth.

The LORD calls us to “remember” something. This is without a doubt the same type of call that is given for the Sabbath. *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all you work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD, your God...*²²⁶

God said *remember* because He knew it would be forgotten. That something that God is calling us to remember in Malachi 4 *just before the coming of the LORD* is specifically the statutes and judgments. We know this because the word “with” is written in the *italics* form, meaning that it is a supplied word in Scripture and is not in the original text. The text should actually read:

Malachi 4:4, 5

Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

The statutes and judgments are singled out in this call to remember.

It is interesting that through the process of the reformation, truth has been added to truth over a long period of time. In the mid-1800's the Sabbath of the fourth commandment was restored to its rightful place among the Ten Commandments. Now, as we near the close of earth's history, we are called to remember the statutes and judgments by none other than the LORD Himself who originally gave them. This is deemed by our LORD and Savior as the completion of the restoration of “all things”. It is truly His last call to *remember*.

Malachi 4:6 *He will turn the hearts...*

This is the same phrase we see in 1 Kings 18:37, “*You have turned*

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their hearts back to You again". Worshiping according to God's plan and keeping the commandments, statutes and judgments have always been seen as turning to God.

The curse will fall upon whomever does not heed the call to remember the statutes and judgments. "*Remember the law of Moses.... the statutes and judgments.... lest I strike the earth with a curse.*"²²⁷ The choice is left with us; will we remember?

The sad end of the story is found in the book of Isaiah. Speaking now of the aftermath of the Second Coming of our LORD, Isaiah declares,

Isaiah 24: 5, 6

The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance [statutes], broken down the everlasting covenant. Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, and those who dwell in it are desolate. Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned and few men are left.

God is calling upon us to place the final piece of the restoration puzzle in place to restore all that was lost when the church descended down into the pit of the Dark Ages. The feasts are central to worship and celebration as God ordained it. The appointed times that were changed by man are in need of being restored. God knew we would forget so He said "remember".

God knew that during the dark ages the Sabbath as well as the statutes and judgments would be forgotten and lost sight of. However, He knew through the process of the reformation that all things would ultimately be restored. In His timing that knows no haste or delay He has deemed that the statutes and judgments would be the *last* thing to be restored—final touches on the

227 Malachi 4:4-6

reformation process.

“In the time of the end every divine institution is to be restored. The breach made in the law at the time the Sabbath was changed by man, is to be repaired.”²²⁸

The Elijah Message that Jesus talked about included a call back to all the commandments of the LORD, that call included the statutes and judgments of which God’s appointments with His people are a part.²²⁹

Malachi 4:6, “*He will turn the hearts....*” This is the same phrase we see in 1 Kings 18:37, “*You have turned their hearts back to You again.*” Worshiping according to God’s plan and keeping the commandments, statutes and judgments has always been seen as turning to God.

1 Kings 8:57, 58

May the LORD our God be with us, as He was with our fathers, May He not leave us nor forsake us, that He may incline [turn] our hearts to Himself, to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, which He commanded our fathers.

Finally, whoever does not heed the call to remember the statutes and judgments, upon him the curse will fall.

Malachi 4: 4-6

Remember the law of Moses.... the statutes and judgments.... lest I strike the earth with a curse.

The choice is left with us; will we remember?

The words of Scripture are calculated to bring conviction to the heart that is seeking truth!

228 Ellen White, *Prophets and Kings*, p 678

229 See Leviticus 23:41

Learning from God's Festivals

As we come to the end of this study it is my hope that you have seen enough evidence to warrant a deeper investigation of this subject. Each of us must draw our own conclusion.

God's original purpose for the feasts—worship, celebration, fellowship with family and friends, and instruction in righteousness are as valid today as when they were given. Equally important are the prophetic implications. The annual festal system is a compacted prophecy of the plan of salvation. There are blessings and benefits for all who choose to celebrate the feasts today. All of these things together add up to a closer walk with Him. Isn't that what God wants for us?

There is much more that can be said in regard to the festivals of God. However, I believe there is enough evidence contained in this book to support the celebration of the festivals of God. It is my prayer that I have represented God in as positive manner as is possible.

Since God has given us His Sabbath as a special time for Him to bless us, can we afford to miss it? No. Since God has given us the feasts as special sacred seasons for Him to bless us, can we afford to miss them? Please think about these questions carefully. I believe

they demand a response.

God in His infinite wisdom understands our basic human needs:

- a knowledge of our Creator
- fellowship with our family, friends and fellow believers
- worship of something outside of ourselves
- celebration

God incorporated into His original calendar special weekly and annual times for worship, celebration, and fellowship with family and friends. Our Creator knew that if He did not set this time aside for us, we would not. We see this clearly in the way the Sabbath has been neglected today. Only those who recognize the value of the fourth commandment in regard to worship and fellowship experience its blessings.

The feasts carry with them the same intent as the Sabbath, but instead of a weekly celebration, the feasts are annual celebrations and often longer than one day.

During these annual celebrations, family and friends, who are too busy or separated by distance, can come together for fellowship. This is what God originally intended. Have our human needs changed? Have God's purposes changed? The feasts still serve their original purpose. If God saw fit that His calendar included special times for us to meet with Him before sin, how much more important is it now since our fall into sin?

Remember the two questions that began this study: (1) do these festivals have any relevance to the 21st century Christian church, and (2) what purpose would there be for us in celebrating these festivals today?

You will notice that the answers to these questions are found

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through understanding God's original purposes for giving the festivals to His children. The reasons God originally gave the festivals are quite basic. The annual celebrations would be of a longer duration than that of the weekly Sabbath celebration. The basic human need for worship, celebration, and fellowship with friends and loved ones would be met. After sin, the festivals took on additional meaning to reveal truth about the plan of salvation (as did the Sabbath).

Each festival points to a different phase of the plan of salvation. Therefore, every year, beginning in the spring and through each festal season, God's people would systematically recall each facet of the plan of salvation from beginning to end (past, present, and future).

The planning for these events would help God's people keep their focus on Him and His plan for their lives.

The feasts provide opportunity for God's people to celebrate, by faith, the future ultimate fulfillment of the festal calendar.

These feasts are prophetic, and when understood correctly reveal tremendous insights into future events.

Another important purpose of the festivals was and is to promote and maintain unity in purpose and understanding among God's people.

The most important reason of all for celebrating the feasts, the summation of all of the above is to increase the faith of God's people so that they would choose to serve Him now and in the world to come.

I believe it would be a scene well pleasing to God and the angels if His people in this generation would unite as did Israel of old and resolve to celebrate His festivals. He is as willing to pour

out His blessings on His church today as He did so many years ago.

God still desires to meet with us. He has been separated from His people far too long. He longs for these appointed times—He gave us the appointed times to be with us; they were not created for the purpose of sacrificing.

Plus, the total number of His annual divinely appointed feast days is seven, God's favourite number!

We have found no Scriptural evidence that God's original purpose for the feasts was fulfilled and therefore done away with by nailing them to the cross. The evidence has been to the contrary.

We have found abundant evidence in Scripture and in the writings of Ellen White²³⁰ to prove that the fulfillment for most of the festal calendar is still future. It is safe then for us to take the position that there is relevance for them in our lives today.

Since type (shadow) has not met antitype (fulfillment) we are still living in the "*shadow of things to come*."²³¹ Because we are still in the shadows, there is still much to be gained by keeping the feasts as we try to understand their future fulfillments.

We have seen that God is still speaking to us today through the festal system to help us understand the future fulfillments. Since the types were given in the past and the fulfillments for them are still in the future, can we come to any other conclusion than that there continues to be a purpose for them in the present?

As students of Scripture it is our responsibility to understand how they apply to us today.

This concept of future fulfillments may be new to some readers.

230 See Appendix 2, p 174

231 Colossians 2:17

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However, these ultimate fulfillments are the strongest evidence that there remains a purpose for the feasts today.

Jesus did not come to change the religion that He had given, but came to change the minds of those who changed that religion.

Matthew 5:17, 18

Do not think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

Jesus came to fill with meaning the religion that He had originally given. An understanding of the feasts gives a full understanding of the ministry and work of our Savior. This teaching in the feasts brings Jesus to the front and center, making Him the substance of the feasts.

We have examined the purposes for which God originally gave the feasts and found that they are all still applicable to us today. In our shrinking world of high-speed connections, what we lack is a basic connection with God, family, and friends. These feasts were designed to supply this need.

We have examined Scriptural evidence that the feasts continued to be an integral part of church life throughout the New Testament and into the fourth century. It was at this time that the Catholic Church completed the change from the Biblical Sabbath to their counterfeit sabbath. It was with the same stroke of the pen that they replaced God's Festivals with its own festivals.

History bears the testimony that the Sabbath and the feasts were kept by pockets of Christians from New Testament times until now. We have also seen clear Biblical evidence that the feasts will be kept on the new earth. With festal celebrations in the past and in the future, it is logical to conclude that they have true

meaning and purpose for us today.

We have considered Ellen White's position on the feasts and found that she wrote about them in a positive manner and not once does she indicate that we should not keep them. She does not say or even suggest that the feasts were nailed to the cross. She has a chapter dedicated to the feasts of the Lord in her book *Patriarchs and Prophets* entitled "The Annual Feasts." There are excerpts from that chapter included in this book. She covers the reasons why God gave the feasts to ancient Israel and she gives an overview of the feasts showing their prophetic implications.

She agrees with Paul, in Colossians 2:17, where he says the feasts are "a shadow of things to come" (future). In *The Acts of the Apostles* she writes, "the whole system of types and symbols was a compacted prophecy of the gospel, a presentation in which were bound up the promises of redemption".²³²

The feasts are a "compacted prophecy of gospel" from beginning to end. She also wrote that the festal "types which relate to the second advent must be fulfilled at the time pointed out in the symbolic service".²³³

The gospel did not end at the cross; all is not fulfilled. We are still in the shadows of the future festal fulfillments. By faith, as we partake of the festal types, we see and experience their fulfillments afar off. Celebrating the feasts will bring reality to our faith. When these festal celebrations are experienced in the context of what the Lord Jesus Christ has done, is doing, and will do for us in the future, the gospel becomes extremely clear. The gospel is the Good News that the festal calendar will be fulfilled.

The feasts are not only typical in event but also typical in time.

232 Ellen White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p 14

233 Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p 399

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This is an extremely important point considering the feasts meet their ultimate fulfillment in the book of Revelation. After studying all Ellen White has written on the feasts, it is clear that God in His unfolding of all truth did not reveal the subject of the feasts to Ellen White in its entirety. He did, however, open a door through her for others to enter.

My personal conclusion is that the festivals would serve a positive purpose for God's church today. God's original purposes for the feasts are as valid today as when they were given and there are blessings and benefits for all who choose to celebrate them. His feasts were given to enhance our relationship with Him and with each other. God is seeking a closer walk with us. Will you seek a closer walk with Him?

“All should be careful about presenting new views of Scripture before they have given these points thorough study, and are fully prepared to sustain them from the Bible. Introduce nothing that will cause dissension, without clear evidence that in it God is giving a special message for this time.”²³⁴

The age old adage that “timing is everything” is completely appropriate in this case. In the process of restoring all things God's providential clock is indicating the time is now.

If we approach this subject with an open mind and a willing heart, I am sure that our duty and privilege concerning this matter will become clear. Jesus promised, “*If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine...*”²³⁵

It just might be that the hand of the One whose timing knows no haste and no delay has something to show us just when we need

234 Ellen White, *Testimonies to Ministers*, p 106

235 John 7:17

it most. There are many Seventh-day Adventists and others from various faiths that are coming to these same conclusions. It used to be that Seventh-day Adventists were foremost in leading the world to present truth, but now there are many voices declaring the way. I believe this is our signal that God is on the move.

If this is new light to us, should we be afraid of it because it may be controversial? In the past, it would seem that new understandings of Scripture have always been controversial.

There is a principle in Luke 5:39, “*And no one, having drunk old wine, immediately desires new; for he says ‘the old wine is better.’*” What Jesus is saying here is new teachings are not readily accepted because most people are comfortable with what they already know. Also, they are afraid that they might be led astray, so they decide to stay with the old.

Yes, we must be careful, but at the same time not so careful that we will not even investigate something because it’s new or because we do not want to believe it. If it is false, a thorough search will reveal this; if it is true, this will also be revealed.

We, as Seventh-day Adventists, realize a special work has been given to us: that is, to give “The Elijah Message”, a message, which according to Jesus, “*will restore all things*”.²³⁶ Elijah’s message was to call people back to true worship as God ordained it, that included coming back to “*the commandments, statutes, and judgments of the LORD*”.²³⁷ The message of the three angels’ in Revelation 14 parallels this call to true worship, coming back to the commandments of the LORD, and judgment.

Malachi 4:4-5 reveals a message that is to be given—the Elijah Message:

236 Matthew 17:11

237 1 King 18:18; Malachi 4:4

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Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

Notice that this call is back to the Ten Commandments as well as the statutes and judgments, which includes the feasts.

Is it possible that we are so busy that we will not take the time to investigate what God may be showing us today? Are we willing to ignore the blessings He is holding out to us?

In every generation there have been those who would not leave their salvation in the hands of others. These people had learned to take new ideas to the Word of God; comparing Scripture with Scripture. These people “*were more fair-minded*” and “*searched the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so*”.²³⁸ The battle cry of the reformation was their motto: “The Bible and the Bible only.”²³⁹

The challenge before us is to answer this question: What will we do with the feasts? What will you do?

Friend, whomever you are, whatever your position—a teacher in Israel or a church mouse—consider this question carefully: If the concept of celebrating the feasts is new to you, what will you do with this “privilege and duty” that you did not even “suspect to be in the Bible”? I ask you to take it to the Word of God, “to see whether these things were so”. Make the battle cry of the reformation yours, “the Bible and the Bible only”.

You might be thinking, if this teaching on the feasts is true, our prophet would have told us. Ellen White was an instrument in the hand of God, doing the work that was set before her in the restoration of “all things”. God used her, inspired her, led her, and

238 Acts 17:11

239 Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p 336

even gave her visions, but she was not the end of the story. She never claimed to know and understand all that was necessary from the Word of God. It was Joseph Bates (a layperson) who influenced James and Ellen White to accept the Sabbath truth. This happened after she had received visions from God.

At times God uses ordinary people like you and me to bring truth to those who might think they have it. Ellen White's primary role was to point the church back to the Word of God. If we will but go to the Word of God and compare Scripture with Scripture, we will find that all the prophets taught these truths. We need to go to the Scriptures.

Ellen White understood that she was not the end of the story when she penned, on page 114 of *The Ellen White 1888 Materials*,

“There are glorious truths to come [future] before the people of God [that is us]. Privileges and duties which they [we] do not even suspect to be in the Bible will be laid open before the followers of Christ [us]. As they [we] follow on in the path of humble obedience, doing God's will, they [we] will know more and more of the oracles of God, and be established in right doctrines.”

Through her writings, she points to the Word of God for the end of the story. She never claimed knowledge of all truth.

Each of us began this study with our own preconceived ideas. So now we must answer the question: do our preconceived ideas concur with Scripture? We must not allow traditional thinking to alter what the Bible says. We must, “*Test all things; hold fast what is good*”.²⁴⁰

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I am appealing to all who read this book: heed the cry of reformation and go to the Bible, and the Bible only, to see if these teachings are true. I have always wondered what it must have felt like to be one of the great reformers of old when they called the people back to the truths of the Bible. I pray that we are going to find out. God is calling us to be His spokespersons to bring the light of truth to those who do not have it.

My sincere desire is that the feasts do not become a point of controversy in our church but rather a point of study. The more that we as a community study this subject, the more likely it is that we will collectively understand what is truth and what is not. May God give us the energy, strength, desire, and love to do His will.

Appendix 1

God's Festival Calendar

God's Appointed Times, from Leviticus 23

Holy Day	Purpose	Timing
Sabbath	Memorial of Creation	Seventh day of the week
Passover	Our salvation in Christ	14 th day of Nisan (the first month) March-April
Feast of Unleavened Bread	New life in Christ	15 th -21 st of Nisan March-April
Pentecost	Outpouring of the Spirit	50 days after Passover May-June
Feast of Trumpets	Announcement of the opening of Judgment	1 st day of Tishri (the seventh month) September-October
Day of Atonement	Close of Judgment	10 th day of Tishri
Feast of Tabernacles (Booths or Sukkot or Ingathering)	Celebration after cleansing of all sin and new start; God with us	15 th -22 nd of Tishri September-October

Appendix 2

Relevant Ellen White Quotes

I believe Ellen White did not fully examine the subject of the feasts. It may be possible God chose not to reveal the feasts to her in their entirety because He was saving this for a generation not yet born: “In the time of the end every divine institution is to be restored...” The feasts may be another piece in the process of restoring all things, in God’s time. For this reason I have learned not to rely on Ellen White as the final expositor of all truth. We must be able to sustain all of our teachings from the Word of God and the Word of God only. I believe this to be in accordance with her will.

1) *Review and Herald*, Feb 25, 1890:

“There are old, yet new truths still to be added to the treasures of our knowledge.”

2) *The Ellen White 1888 Materials*, p. 114:

“There are glorious truths to come before the people of God. Privileges and duties which they do not even suspect to be in the Bible will be laid open before the followers of Christ. As they follow on in the path of humble obedience, doing God’s will, they will know more and more of the oracles of God, and be established in right doctrines.”

3) *Review and Herald*, July 12, 1898 paragraph, 10-15:

“Christ had many truths to give to his disciples,

of which he could not speak, because they did not advance with the light that was flashed upon Levitical laws and the sacrificial offerings. They did not accept the light, advance with the light, and follow on to still greater brightness as Providence should lead the way. And for the same reason, Christ's disciples of 1898 do not comprehend important matters of truth. So dull has been the comprehension even of those who teach the truth to others, that many things cannot be opened to them until they reach heaven. This ought not to be. But as men's minds become narrow, they think they know all, when they have only a glimpse of truth. They close their minds, as if there were no more for them to learn; and should the Lord attempt to lead them on, they would not accept the increased light. They cling to the spot where they see light, when that which they see is only a glimmer of the bright beams they might enjoy. They know very little of what it means to follow in the footsteps of Christ.

"In their harmonious relation, the truths of Scripture are like links in a chain. Just as fast as our minds are quickened by the Spirit of God to comprehend light, and in humbleness appropriate it, we shall dispense it to others, and give the glory back to God. The development of truth is the reward of the humble-hearted seeker who will fear of God, and walk with him. The truth which the mind grasps as truth is capable of constant expansion and new development. While we behold it, the truth is revealed in all its bearings in the life and character, and becomes more clear, and certain, and beautiful.

The mind that grasps it in its preciousness becomes elevated, ennobled, sanctified.

“Far, very far, are human minds from grasping the teachings of Christ. These are old truths in new settings. The entire system of Judaism was the gospel veiled. Those who will not consider are like the Jews. It is humbling to their dignity and pride to work the mines of truth. But the Light of the world is sending his divine rays to illuminate the entire Jewish economy, and the minds that have been accepting the sayings of men as the commandments of God are to be educated to look to God himself, the author of all truth....

“Very many teachers are content with a supposition in regard to the truth. They have crude ideas, and are content with a surface work in searching for truth, taking for granted that they have all that is essential. They take the sayings of others for truth, being too indolent to put themselves to diligent, earnest labor, represented in the Word as digging for hidden treasure. But man’s inventions are not only unreliable; they are dangerous; for they place man where God should be. They place the sayings of men where a ‘Thus saith the Lord’ should be. The world’s Redeemer alone possesses the key to unlock the treasure-house of the Old Testament. He explores hidden things. He separates the precious truth from superstition and error and the devisings and imaginings of men.

“Sharp, clear perceptions of truth will never be the reward of indolence. Investigation of every point

that has been received as truth will richly repay the searcher; he will find precious gems. And in closely investigating every jot and tittle which we think is established truth, in comparing scripture with scripture, we may discover errors in our interpretation of Scripture. Christ would have the searcher of his word sink the shaft deeper into the mines of truth. If the search is properly conducted, jewels of inestimable value will be found. The word of God is the mine of the unsearchable riches of Christ.”

There is something in the above quotation that we need to understand correctly. Ellen White never claimed to be 100 percent correct on every point of her understanding of Scripture. I ask that you prayerfully read the previous statement again and apply the “we” and “our” to include Ellen White, because that is what she has done. The implications of this quotation are as deep as the Word of God. She understood that by “closely investigating every point ...which we think is established truth ...we may discover errors in our interpretation of Scripture.” This is a difficult truth; nevertheless, it must be stated. If we would heed Christ’s counsel, and “sink the shaft deeper into the mines of truth ...jewels of inestimable value will be found.” “If the search is properly conducted” “we may discover errors in our interpretation of Scripture.”

4) *The Great Controversy*, p. 399:

“The slaying of the Passover lamb was a shadow of the death of Christ. Says Paul, ‘Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us’ (1 Corinthians 5:7). The sheaf of first-fruits, which at the time of the Passover was waved before the Lord, was typical of the

resurrection of Christ. Paul says, in speaking of the resurrection of the Lord, and of all his people, 'Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming' (1 Corinthians 15:23). Like the wave-sheaf, which was the first ripe grain gathered before the harvest, Christ is the first-fruits of that immortal harvest of redeemed ones that at the future resurrection shall be gathered into the garner of God.

"These types were fulfilled, not only as to the event, but as to the time. On the fourteenth day of the first Jewish month, the very day and month on which, for fifteen long centuries, the Passover lamb had been slain, Christ, having eaten the Passover with his disciples, instituted that feast which was to commemorate his own death as 'the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' That same night he was taken by wicked hands, to be crucified and slain. And as the antitype of the wave-sheaf, our Lord was raised from the dead on the third day, 'the first-fruits of them that slept' (1 Corinthians 15:20). A sample [type] of all the resurrected just, whose "vile body" shall be changed, and 'fashioned like unto his glorious body' (Phil. 3:21).

"In like manner, the types [plural] which relate to the Second Advent must be fulfilled at the time pointed out in the symbolic service."

The fulfillment of both spring and fall types are seen in the book of Revelation. Most people are totally unaware of this fact because it has only come to light recently. This is due to a renewed interest and study into "the feasts of the LORD" as listed in Leviticus 23.

The sanctuary service is two dimensional—events and time. It portrays salvation events as well as a timetable for them. The fall types (the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles) did not meet their fulfillment at the first coming of Jesus because they relate to the second coming. Therefore, according to good logic, Ellen White states they “must be fulfilled at the time pointed out in the symbolic service” just as the spring “types were fulfilled, not only as to the event, but as to the time” (*The Great Controversy*, p. 399).

Therefore, these sacred times do have a purpose for the last day church. God’s last day church will realize the ultimate fulfillment of these feasts not only as to the event but as to the time appointed on God’s calendar.

These Ellen White quotations are not included with the goal of providing evidence that the Feasts are relevant for today’s church. Ellen White’s words, rather, involve principles that are unchangeable. Truth is ever unfolding. In fact, the reformation was built on these principles.

Appendix 3

Key Bible Readings

All readings taken from the New King James Version.

Acts 15 (1-35)

¹And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” ²Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question. ³So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, describing the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy to all the brethren. ⁴And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders; and they reported all things that God had done with them. ⁵But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, “It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.”

The Jerusalem Council

⁶Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter. ⁷And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: “Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. ⁸So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, ⁹and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. ¹⁰Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? ¹¹But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.”

¹²Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles. ¹³And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, “Men and brethren, listen to me: ¹⁴Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. ¹⁵And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:

¹⁶‘After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, And I will set it up; ¹⁷So that the rest of mankind may seek the LORD, Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, Says the LORD who does all these things.’ ¹⁸“Known to God from

eternity are all His works. ¹⁹Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, ²⁰but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood.

²¹For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath.”

The Jerusalem Decree

²² Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, namely, Judas who was also named Barsabas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren.

²³ They wrote this, letter by them: The apostles, the elders, and the brethren, To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings.

²⁴ Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, “You must be circumcised and keep the law”—to whom we gave no such commandment—²⁵it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, ²⁶men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁷We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who will also report the same things by word of mouth. ²⁸For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: ²⁹that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things

strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.

Continuing Ministry in Syria

³⁰So when they were sent off, they came to Antioch; and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the letter. ³¹When they had read it, they rejoiced over its encouragement. ³²Now Judas and Silas, themselves being prophets also, exhorted and strengthened the brethren with many words. ³³And after they had stayed there for a time, they were sent back with greetings from the brethren to the apostles. ³⁴However, it seemed good to Silas to remain there. ³⁵Paul and Barnabas also remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

Leviticus 23 Feasts of the Lord

¹And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim *to be* holy convocations, these *are* My feasts.

The Sabbath

³ ‘Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work *on it*; it is the Sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.

The Passover and Unleavened Bread

⁴ ‘These *are* the feasts of the LORD, holy convocations

which you shall proclaim at their appointed times. ⁵ On the fourteenth *day* of the first month at twilight is the LORD's Passover. ⁶ And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; seven days you must eat unleavened bread. ⁷ On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it. ⁸ But you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD for seven days. The seventh day *shall be* a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work *on it*.”

The Feast of Firstfruits

⁹ And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁰ “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. ¹¹ He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. ¹² And you shall offer on that day, when you wave the sheaf, a male lamb of the first year, without blemish, as a burnt offering to the LORD.

¹³ Its grain offering *shall be* two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering made by fire to the LORD, for a sweet aroma; and its drink offering *shall be* of wine, one-fourth of a hin. ¹⁴ You shall eat neither bread nor parched grain nor fresh grain until the same day that you have brought an offering to your God; *it shall be* a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

The Feast of Weeks

¹⁵ ‘And you shall count for yourselves from the day

after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. ¹⁶ Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD. ¹⁷ You shall bring from your dwellings two wave *loaves* of two-tenths of an *ephah*. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. *They are* the firstfruits to the LORD. ¹⁸ And you shall offer with the bread seven lambs of the first year, without blemish, one young bull, and two rams. They shall be *as* a burnt offering to the LORD, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma to the LORD. ¹⁹ Then you shall sacrifice one kid of the goats as a sin offering, and two male lambs of the first year as a sacrifice of a peace offering. ²⁰ The priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits *as* a wave offering before the LORD, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the LORD for the priest. ²¹ And you shall proclaim on the same day *that* it is a holy convocation to you. You shall do no customary work *on it*. *It shall be* a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

²² “When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleaning from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: *I am* the LORD your God.”

The Feast of Trumpets

²³ Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁴ “Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘In the seventh month, on the first *day* of the month, you shall have

a sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. ²⁵ You shall do no customary work on it; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD.”

The Day of Atonement

²⁶ And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ²⁷ “Also the tenth day of this seventh month *shall be* the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. ²⁸ And you shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God. ²⁹ For any person who is not afflicted *in soul* on that same day shall be cut off from his people. ³⁰ And any person who does any work on that same day, that person I will destroy from among his people. ³¹ You shall do no manner of work; *it shall be* a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. ³² It *shall be* to you a sabbath of *solemn* rest, and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath.”

The Feast of Tabernacles

³³ Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ³⁴ “Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘The fifteenth day of this seventh month *shall be* the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the LORD. ³⁵ On the first day *there shall be* a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it. ³⁶ For seven days you shall offer an offering

made by fire to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. It is a sacred assembly, *and* you shall do no customary work *on it*.

³⁷ ‘These *are* the feasts of the LORD which you shall proclaim *to be* holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire to the LORD, a burnt offering and a grain offering, a sacrifice and drink offerings, everything on its day—³⁸ besides the Sabbaths of the LORD, besides your gifts, besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill offerings which you give to the LORD.

³⁹ ‘Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the LORD *for* seven days; on the first day *there shall be* a sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a sabbath-rest.⁴⁰ And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days.⁴¹ You shall keep it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. *It shall be* a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month.⁴² You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths,⁴³ that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: *I am* the LORD your God.’”

⁴⁴ So Moses declared to the children of Israel the feasts of the LORD.

Revelation 15: 1-8

Prelude to the Bowl Judgments

¹ Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete.

² And I saw *something* like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark *and* over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. ³ They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying:

“Great and marvelous *are* Your works,

Lord God Almighty!

Just and true *are* Your ways,

O King of the saints!

⁴Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name?

For *You* alone *are* holy.

For all nations shall come and worship before You,

For Your judgments have been manifested.”

⁵ After these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened.²⁴¹ ⁶And out of the temple came the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with

²⁴¹This is a direct reference to the Day of Atonement when final judgment is made, when every person on earth will have made their decision whether he will serve God or not. The seven last plagues follow.

golden bands. ⁷ Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever. ⁸ The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.

Numbers 28

Daily Offerings

¹ Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²

“Command the children of Israel, and say to them, ‘My offering, My food for My offerings made by fire as a sweet aroma to Me, you shall be careful to offer to Me at their appointed time.’

³ “And you shall say to them, ‘This is the offering made by fire which you shall offer to the LORD: two male lambs in their first year without blemish, day by day, as a regular burnt offering. ⁴ The one lamb you shall offer in the morning, the other lamb you shall offer in the evening, ⁵ and one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a grain offering mixed with one-fourth of a hin of pressed oil. ⁶ It is a regular burnt offering which was ordained at Mount Sinai for a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD. ⁷ And its drink offering *shall be* one-fourth of a hin for each lamb; in a holy *place* you shall pour out the drink to the LORD as an offering. ⁸ The other lamb you shall offer in the evening; as the morning grain offering and its drink offering, you shall offer *it* as an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.

Sabbath Offerings

⁹ ‘And on the Sabbath day two lambs in their first year, without blemish, and two-tenths of an *ephah* of fine flour as a grain offering, mixed with oil, with its drink offering—¹⁰ *this is the burnt offering for every Sabbath, besides the regular burnt offering with its drink offering.*

Monthly Offerings

¹¹ ‘At the beginnings of your months you shall present a burnt offering to the LORD: two young bulls, one ram, and seven lambs in their first year, without blemish; ¹² three-tenths of an *ephah* of fine flour as a grain offering, mixed with oil, for each bull; two-tenths of an *ephah* of fine flour as a grain offering, mixed with oil, for the one ram; ¹³ and one-tenth of an *ephah* of fine flour, mixed with oil, as a grain offering for each lamb, as a burnt offering of sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD. ¹⁴ Their drink offering shall be half a hin of wine for a bull, one-third of a hin for a ram, and one-fourth of a hin for a lamb; *this is the burnt offering for each month throughout the months of the year.* ¹⁵ Also one kid of the goats as a sin offering to the LORD shall be offered, besides the regular burnt offering and its drink offering.

Offerings at Passover

¹⁶ ‘On the fourteenth day of the first month is the Passover of the LORD. ¹⁷ And on the fifteenth day of this month is the feast; unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days. ¹⁸ On the first day *you shall have a holy convocation.* You shall do no customary work.

¹⁹ And you shall present an offering made by fire as a burnt offering to the LORD: two young bulls, one ram, and seven lambs in their first year. Be sure they are without blemish. ²⁰ Their grain offering shall be of fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths of *an ephah* you shall offer for a bull, and two-tenths for a ram; ²¹ you shall offer one-tenth of *an ephah* for each of the seven lambs; ²² also one goat as a sin offering, to make atonement for you. ²³ You shall offer these besides the burnt offering of the morning, which is for a regular burnt offering. ²⁴ In this manner you shall offer the food of the offering made by fire daily for seven days, as a sweet aroma to the LORD; it shall be offered besides the regular burnt offering and its drink offering. ²⁵ And on the seventh day you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work.

Offerings at the Feast of Weeks

²⁶ 'Also on the day of the firstfruits, when you bring a new grain offering to the LORD at your *Feast of Weeks*, you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work. ²⁷ You shall present a burnt offering as a sweet aroma to the LORD: two young bulls, one ram, and seven lambs in their first year, ²⁸ with their grain offering of fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths of *an ephah* for each bull, two-tenths for the one ram, ²⁹ and one-tenth for each of the seven lambs; ³⁰ also one kid of the goats, to make atonement for you. ³¹ Be sure they are without blemish. You shall present *them* with their drink offerings, besides the regular burnt offering with its grain offering.

*Numbers 29**Offerings at the Feast of Trumpets*

¹ 'And in the seventh month, on the first *day* of the month, you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work. For you it is a day of blowing the trumpets. ² You shall offer a burnt offering as a sweet aroma to the LORD: one young bull, one ram, *and* seven lambs in their first year, without blemish. ³ Their grain offering *shall be* fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths *of an ephah* for the bull, two-tenths for the ram, ⁴ and one-tenth for each of the seven lambs; ⁵ also one kid of the goats *as* a sin offering, to make atonement for you; ⁶ besides the burnt offering with its grain offering for the New Moon, the regular burnt offering with its grain offering, and their drink offerings, according to their ordinance, as a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD.

Offerings on the Day of Atonement

⁷ 'On the tenth *day* of this seventh month you shall have a holy convocation. You shall afflict your souls; you shall not do any work. ⁸ You shall present a burnt offering to the LORD *as* a sweet aroma: one young bull, one ram, *and* seven lambs in their first year. Be sure they are without blemish. ⁹ Their grain offering *shall be of* fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths *of an ephah* for the bull, two-tenths for the one ram, ¹⁰ and one-tenth for each of the seven lambs; ¹¹ also one kid of the goats *as* a sin offering, besides the sin offering for atonement, the regular burnt offering with its grain offering, and their drink offerings.

Offerings at the Feast of Tabernacles

¹² 'On the fifteenth day of the seventh month you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work, and you shall keep a feast to the LORD seven days. ¹³ You shall present a burnt offering, an offering made by fire as a sweet aroma to the LORD: thirteen young bulls, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs in their first year. They shall be without blemish. ¹⁴ Their grain offering *shall be of* fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths *of an ephah* for each of the thirteen bulls, two-tenths for each of the two rams, ¹⁵ and one-tenth for each of the fourteen lambs; ¹⁶ also one kid of the goats *as* a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

¹⁷ 'On the second day *present* twelve young bulls, two rams, fourteen lambs in their first year without blemish, ¹⁸ and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; ¹⁹ also one kid of the goats *as* a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering with its grain offering, and their drink offerings.

²⁰ 'On the third day *present* eleven bulls, two rams, fourteen lambs in their first year without blemish, ²¹ and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; ²² also one goat *as* a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

²³ 'On the fourth day *present* ten bulls, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs in their first year, without blemish,

²⁴ and their grain offering and their drink offerings

for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; ²⁵ also one kid of the goats *as* a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

²⁶ 'On the fifth day *present* nine bulls, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs in their first year without blemish, ²⁷ and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; ²⁸ also one goat *as* a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

²⁹ 'On the sixth day *present* eight bulls, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs in their first year without blemish, ³⁰ and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; ³¹ also one goat *as* a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

³² 'On the seventh day *present* seven bulls, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs in their first year without blemish, ³³ and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; ³⁴ also one goat *as* a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

³⁵ 'On the eighth day you shall have a sacred assembly. You shall do no customary work. ³⁶ You shall present a burnt offering, an offering made by fire as a sweet aroma to the LORD: one bull, one ram, seven lambs in their first year without blemish, ³⁷ and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bull, for the

ram, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; ³⁸ also one goat *as* a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

³⁹ ‘These you shall present to the LORD at your appointed feasts (besides your vowed offerings and your freewill offerings) as your burnt offerings and your grain offerings, as your drink offerings and your peace offerings.’”

⁴⁰ So Moses told the children of Israel everything, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

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 3rd Edition,
 April, 2012

