

Why the Holy Days?

by: Ronald L. Dart

Why do we observe the Holy Days of the bible? While most Christians go their way observing Christmas and Easter, why do we rather observe Passover, the Days of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles? Now for the first part of this question, that is about most Christian churches observing Christmas and Easter, I will just refer you to an encyclopedia. Christmas and Easter are not in the bible but they are in your encyclopedia and you'll find out all you've ever wanted to know about their origins and how they came to be a part of the Christian church. The other days I mentioned are in the bible and they really have to be carefully considered and I really think a lot of Christian people just have never thought about it. It never really crossed their minds.

I remember the first time it dawned on me. I had been reading one of the booklets that said, about Christmas and about Easter and I had seen that these did not have any kind of Christian origin at all. And that there was no biblical authorization for them at all, and the thought, one thought followed another right through my mind and said well if these are not to be observed are there any holidays that ought to be? And of course it doesn't take you any time at all in studying the bible to find that there are holidays or Holy Days in the bible. And they aren't Christmas and Easter. They are the seven that I read to you just a moment before. Now, the first reason why we observe the Holy Days of the bible is simple enough. It's because God commands it. And for some people that's good enough. God says do it, they can go out for a cup of coffee now they don't have to listen to the rest of the sermon they're satisfied, God says do it so I will do it. But there is a little more to it than that. God commands it, the most familiar place for those of us who observe the holy days is Leviticus 23 which lays out the full set of all the annual Holy days and it also includes the weekly Sabbath as a Holy day, to be observed.

In Lev.23:1 "The Lord spoke unto Moses saying, speak unto the children of Israel and say unto them concerning the Feasts of the Lord, which you shall proclaim to be Holy convocations. These are my feasts." Now, the assumption made by many when they first think about this passage, about a commandment of God to keep these festivals. If you're talking to a member of most Protestant or Catholic churches, and you ask this question, or you discuss this question at all. Their assumption would be that what this says is "These are the Feasts of and for Israel. They are festivals which you shall proclaim to be Holy Convocations, they are your feasts." In other words they would assume these are Jewish holidays. Now the problem with this is, if you read back to what the scripture says, "speak

unto the children of Israel and say unto them concerning the Feasts of the Lord." They are not the feasts of Israel, they are the feasts of the Lord which are revealed to Israel.

Now there is another slight side track here that I would like to just remind you of. I have mentioned it before, but I think it is very important in this context. It is almost as though there exists a presumption among students of the bible that the only people in the Old Testament that God ever related to, or had any relationship with, were the Jews. Which is a careless expression, what they really mean are Israel. That that's the only people that God ever had any relationships with. That's not true. Now God did, one of the most interesting examples is a man named Balaam who called God by name. Knew what his name was, existed over here as a prophet of God. God spoke to him and he spoke to God. His attitude wasn't right. His set of values wasn't very good, but he did know who God was. And there are little hints and implications in the bible that God can make himself known to whoever he wants whenever he wants wherever he wants. And that this just happens to be the time, when he fulfills a promise he made to an old friend of his named Abraham and calls Israel to be a special people and a witness of him in the earth. And the things that are going to befall Israel, fall upon Israel as a lesson for all mankind. Israel is a testimony of God and God's working with man. And so it is not merely that these were the only people in the world that God had anything to do with at any time.

Don't we all understand that Abraham was not a Jew or an Israelite? That Isaac was not a Jew or an Israelite? That Noah was not, that Adam was not, that it was the grandson of Abraham, whose name was changed to Israel and only after his children came on the scene were there anything that could be called Israelites. And they did not really achieve national identity until after the exodus. So prior to that time people worshiped God, all kinds of people worshiped God. All sorts of people knew who God was. There was one particular man with whom God made a covenant, because he wanted this man, Abraham to be an example. And that his life would be a testimony of God to the people around him and to the world. And then later because of promises he made to Abraham, he called his children Israel. But Israel is nothing but an interim as it were in the overall plan of God. It's just one interval, one period of time in which God works a certain way with a certain people. So he takes these people and he says, now "these are the feasts of the Lord, which you now will proclaim among your people."

And he goes on to explain, "you shall proclaim them to be Holy convocations." which are commanded assemblies, then he says, "even these are MY feasts." Not yours. Mine! Later in Hosea he will take the skin off of Israel when he criticizes them for their feasts and their holy days, and the things that they do. But he makes a distinction, these are mine, those are yours. And he actually considers a corrupt feast to be yours and not his. Now, we feel that if we are going to come to know God and understand his plan, that we really ought to be observing his feasts. I mean why should we, once you understand the origins of Christmas and Easter, and you understand all the symbolism connected with them, why on earth would a Christian person want to introduce that kind of symbolism into their worship? Why

wouldn't we, if we want to know what God is doing, look to his word to see what does he mean by his festivals? What is the symbolism of these festivals? How might it apply to us in some way?

And the fact which I've already alluded to, that Israel was commanded to observe Jehovah's feasts, does not suggest that no one else had that obligation. Does it? Only that Israel did. And if it had a singular significance to them that God told them about, that does not mean that is the only significance of those festivals. Either to them or to others. The fact is that in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, there was a right way to worship God and those who wanted to worship him followed that way. Whether they were Jew or whether they were Gentile. And that's whether they were Old Testament or whether they were New. One way, one Lord and that's all. "Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest. A holy convocation. You shall do no work therein, it is the Sabbath of the Lord your God in all your dwellings."

That's one of them, then he says "these are the feasts of the Lord, even Holy Convocations which you shall proclaim in their seasons." Now you might be interested to know that the Hebrew word for convocation here very closely resembles the Greek word for church. The Hebrew word is *miqra*, and it basically means something called out. The Greek word is *ekklesia* and it means a calling out. So again the idea of convocation or what we call church, *ekklesia*, are very close to the same. You shall have an assembly, both Old and New Testament is the implication of this.

Now, here is the first in Lev. 23:5, the first of the annual Holy Days "in the fourteenth day of the first month at even, is the Lord's Passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of Unleavened Bread to the Lord. Seven days you must eat unleavened bread, in the first day you have a holy convocation you shall do no servile work therein. But you shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord seven days, in the seventh day is a holy convocation you shall do no servile work therein." Now, in Israel's economy and in Israel's covenant with God, there were in addition to the Holy Days, sacrifices. Burnt offerings, sin offerings, different animals that were brought to the temple, killed, their blood sprinkled in certain prescribed manner and burned upon the altar and so forth.

Now there is a presumption among some people that the reason that they don't need to keep the Holy Days is because they think the sacrificial system was abolished, and the Holy days were a part of the sacrificial system and therefore passed away with it. But that doesn't follow, merely because Israel had a set of Holy days given to them and a sacrificial system, and God's instruction to Israel about what they were to do included how they were to use the sacrificial system on the Holy Days that the passing of the sacrificial system says nothing about the observance of the Holy days. And of course the next assumption in it is that the sacrificial system passed. The sacrificial system continued well beyond the death of Jesus on the stake, well beyond the "cross" as people call it. It continued on down until the destruction of the temple. And the prophecies seem to indicate that when the temple is rebuilt and when

the temple or tabernacle is rededicated, that sacrifices will once again be offered. That they haven't been abolished, they simply can't be done right now. But the holy convocation can be done, the assembly can be done, the worship of God can be done, praising God can be done, abstaining from work can be done. All those things work just fine. So these are the instructions about how Israel was to keep the Passover, and what it would mean to them.

And you'll find a detailed set of instructions relative to the Passover in Ex. 12. Now an exposition of Exodus 12 is beyond the scope of what I want to talk to you about today, so I'm not going to do that. But, there is one interesting point in Ex. 12 that I do want you to think about. In Ex. 12:48 "when a stranger shall sojourn with you, and will keep the Passover to the Lord. Let all his males be circumcised and then let him come near and keep it. And he shall be as one who is born in the land for no uncircumcised person shall eat of the Passover. One law shall be to him that is home born and of the stranger that sojourns among you." Now, was the stranger in any way obligated to obey God's law and observe the Passover? Oh yeah. Well, let me put it to you this way. No he was not obligated to unless he wanted to worship God. If he wanted to worship God, if he wanted to obey God, if he wanted to worship God God's way, then yes he had to keep the Passover. If he had to keep the Passover he had to keep it just like the Israelites did, had to follow right in the commonwealth of Israel.

And there was no distinction between them. One law for the home born and for the stranger. God did not make that distinction. And you'll encounter this again and again in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. God does not have one way of salvation for Israel and another way of salvation for someone else. God did not have one way of salvation in the Old Testament and another way of salvation in the New Testament. Salvation is the same way both Testaments for Jews for Gentiles and for all people at all time. Now, the meaning of the Passover though, is a little bit different from just the method. The fact that we on the 14th day of the first month observe the Lord's Passover, and the 15th day of the month we actually start to abstain from bread, this is one thing, but the meaning of the Passover is another. The stranger that came to Israel once they had gotten in and had conquered the land and were living in that area. Would not experience the Passover in quite the same way as the children of Israel. Neither he nor did his children, his predecessors, had been born into slavery in the land of Egypt. They didn't come out of Egypt, there was no connection with Egypt in their own mind as to what they were doing or why they had to do it. If this man wanted to draw near to God he was expected to keep it. Even though he did not have that common experience with Israel. And yet the exodus is tied in very closely, the departure out of Egypt is tied in very closely with the meaning of the Passover even for the stranger.

Now, I don't know if you thought about this very much or not, but the bible is so rich with typology, that's the theological word for symbolism. Symbols that mean things, types and antitypes. Types being models of realities yet to come. What is I think not generally understood is the fact that the Israelites like Abraham were a type. And that Abraham for example in his having to go to the mountain to offer Isaac on the mountain top was a type of

God. He actually went through the motions of God the Father in being prepared to sacrifice his own son on the mountain top, where God took him to the place. That Israel also is in a sense a type of Christ, and that they actually have to go through certain things as a nation, as a people. That have to do with and in prophetic sense look forward to Christ and what Christ is going to do. Israel is called the servant of God, they are in prophecy, the suffering servant. And if you want to go back to Isaiah 52 and 53 and study through them carefully and understanding this you will see that, why, the Jewish people when they read through this will see the nation of Israel as the suffering servant. And Christians will see Jesus Christ as the suffering servant, and they are both right. It is a matter of how you see it and from which perspective you come at it in time and in place. Because Israel was a type of Christ. They were a model. And so the things that they went through are lessons for us.

It was Paul who said this, he said that all the things that fell out to Israel are lessons for us upon whom the ends of the world are come. And we're supposed to look at what happened to them and learn from it. And so when you come to keeping the Passover it doesn't take much studying of the bible to see that Egypt is a type of sin. It doesn't take much awareness to realize that we are to come out of sin. As Israel came out of Egypt. That falls upon you or jumps upon you very quickly in the pages of the bible. Egypt is a type of sin, we've got to come out of sin, the Passover which is the sacrifice of Christ is what makes it possible for us to come out of sin. And for sin to be out of our lives. Then follow the Days of Unleavened Bread and if leaven is a type of sin, then obviously we are putting away the leaven and the corruption and the fermentation as it were of sin during that period of our lives. And that would be meaningful for a gentile wouldn't it? They would understand that. They would grasp what that meant. So, the meaning of the Passover as Israel kept it would actually be different perhaps for a Gentile. It would even perhaps be deeper for a gentile than it was for Israel. Because Israel had a habit of seeing the historical significance of the Holy Day for them as a people, and then with the normal myopia, not seeing one inch beyond that. The gentile required to observe this Holy Day is forced to look beyond it.

Do you follow me? If it's an Israelite, hey I can see it's my history we've got to remember that we came out of Egypt. The gentile required to keep it, saying, I didn't come out of Egypt, what does it mean for me? And therefore it will transcend what Israel otherwise might have thought. Now consider the Feast of Tabernacles. Also in Lev. 23:39 "In the fifteenth day of the seventh month when you have gathered in of the fruit of the land you shall keep a feast to the Lord seven days. On the first day will be a Sabbath, and on the eighth day will be a Sabbath. And you will take to you on the first day, the boughs or fruit of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of thick trees, willows of the brooks, and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days. You shall keep it as feast of the Lord seven days in a year it shall be a statute forever in your generations, you shall keep it in the seventh month." How long? Forever. There is no end to the observance of this festival. You shall dwell in booths seven days all that are Israelite born shall dwell in booths, that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths when I brought

them out of the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God. And Moses declared to the children of Israel the Feasts of the Lord.”

Now for the Israelites fine, it's like the fourth of July we go out and pop fire crackers, it's the day we gained our independence. For the Jewish people, oh my yes, we live in booths seven days and we remember the time that we were delivered out of Egypt we kept the Passover in the spring which was a great celebration of freedom. Then comes the Feast of Tabernacles, when we live in tents to remind us of all those years of wandering in the wilderness before we entered into the promised land and so they have the national sense of this. And often times I'm sure would not look much further than that for their, for what they would see the meaning of it was. And so they went. Now this one of all the Holy Days really tend to look like a Holy day that was designed purely for Israel, because he says all that were Israelite born would dwell in these little huts these brush arbors for seven days. Just for Israel then, this Holy Day right? Well no not quite. Remember Zechariah? Zech.14:16, now I'm not going to take the time today to try to prove to you that this is an end time prophecy. I'll leave it to you to do, it doesn't take much more than a careful reading of Zech. the 14th chapter to see that it is. But he says that it shall come to pass, this is at the very time of the end after that final battle. That everyone that is left of all the nations that came up against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the king the Lord of Hosts and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.”

Uh? Wait a minute now. Israel was to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. Israel was to make brush arbors and live under these brush arbors to remind them that they came out of Egypt, and they dwelt in booths in the wilderness wandering. Right? Not exactly. Because here we are where it says all the nations that came to fight Jerusalem, will dwell in booths, well actually it doesn't say that, doesn't say they will dwell in booths, it says that they will come up from year to year to worship the king the Lord of Hosts and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. Would they be required the same way to dwell in booths? Perhaps they would, but it doesn't seem to be exactly the same point. It shall be that whoever will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the king the Lord of Hosts, upon them there shall be no rain. Ah. Now we're not merely going to be arguing with these people, which I would be happy to make the presentation to them. To sell them the benefits of keeping the Feast of Tabernacles, and how wonderful it is. And how much they will grow, and how much progress they will make spiritually with God. But, and I would try that, but here we are told that there will be sanctions against them, that they will be disciplined if they don't. You don't come up, it's not going to rain. “And if the family of Egypt go not up and come not, that have no rain.” It doesn't rain there normally, do you understand that? The Nile rises and floods the land and that's how they have their water for their crops. So they don't need to have rain as such. O.K. Egypt doesn't get any rain, they don't care about that, so “there will be the plague that the Lord will smite the heathen that don't come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.”

So Egypt doesn't come up, they get the plague. Who? Egypt! Is going to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. Why? Because the Lord your God made you dwell in booths, when you came out of the land of Egypt. Well that doesn't work. That's entirely Israelite, but because that particular piece of symbolism, historical symbolism, applies really only to Israel. Does not mean that the Holy Day only applies to Israel? Or that there is not a symbolism connected to the Holy Day that applies to everybody. And the answer to that is not that hard to find. If one just simply follows the symbolism, the typology through the whole thing of the departure from Egypt, the wandering in the wilderness, and the crossing of Jordan into the promised land. Everybody who has ever written hymns it seems like knows that entering the promised land and crossing Jordan is the end of this life in this veil of tears, this struggle that we have in this temporary tabernacle of the body. And the entering into the Kingdom of God, be it whether you think it is heaven or whether you think it's the millennium, or whatever you may think it is. Crossing the Jordan comes at the return of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, a new life. And the wilderness wandering is the time prior to that when we're all burdened down and uncomfortable and living away from home, and knowing that we have a better city and a better home somewhere else.

So the imagery as it applied to Israel can be peeled off and laid across man, so that all mankind have a lesson to learn from the Feast of Tabernacles. That is only slightly different from the lesson that Israel learned or should have learned, but that the methodology or the symbolism may differ for all mankind from the special symbolism, and the special task really in a way, that God laid upon Israel so that they would be an image and a sign for all mankind. God says "this will be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that don't come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles."

So, I think it seems to be pretty well established that the Holy Days, the festivals were not merely Jewish, that they were made for man. That they were not just Israelite, that they were made for all nations and will be, worship by all nations in the future on pain of sanctions from God. Now they do seem, as I said, of having a different meaning attributed to them for Israel that does not have to be exclusive of a higher spiritual meaning of the days. The very fact that lets say Israel, the Jews, do not see beyond the physical historical meaning of the days, does not mean that that meaning is not there, and is not intended by God. The Holy Days have a historical meaning, they have a prophetic meaning, they have a Christological meaning, and Christological is the branch of theology of the study of Christ, you know theology divides up into Christology, Soteriology, which means the study of salvation, and so forth. They have a special meaning, a Christological meaning, they have a salvation meaning, and it's all overlaid together in the Holy Days. (Flipped tape)

That were not so clear. It reminds me of Proverbs 25:2, "it is the Glory of God to conceal a thing, the honor of kings to search it out." And so the joy of getting down with your bible and studying carefully through the bible and cross referencing your bible to try to understand these things, is really exciting and a great pleasure, and a great joy to do. I think we made historically a very serious mistake, when we assumed the Holy days all had on

meaning. In other words, this Holy Day pictures this. That the Days of Unleavened Bread picture putting sin out of your life. Pentecost pictures receiving the Holy Spirit. You know, Trumpets pictures the return of Christ. Atonement pictures the binding of Satan. Tabernacles pictures the millennium. And the Last Great Day pictures the Great White Throne Judgement. Well, if you take that approach then you implicitly deny that there may be more. That there may be a historical meaning, a prophetic meaning, a meaning that is connected with Christ and his Messiah-ship. A meaning that is connected with salvation, and we have always said that we felt the Holy Days pictured the plan of salvation.

But I think we need to realize that salvation has history, prophecy, the ministry of Christ, the death of Christ and his sacrifice all tied in with it. And I don't believe personally that we have really but scratched the surface of the meaning of the Holy Days and the only reason we have come as far as we have is because we have persisted in the observance of the Holy Days. And because in years gone by, I know I was taught that the scripture that says you are to proclaim these days in their seasons, that we should follow that as Christians by preaching them in their seasons. So I always feel an obligation when the Holy Day comes around to preach the meaning of the day, some aspect of the meaning of the day. And because of that, sometimes there is the effect of peeling off one layer after another and beginning to see more deeply into Gods plan and to see things he is doing that otherwise I just might not realize. So we keep these Holy Days because God commanded them. And they are commanded for man, not merely for the Jews, they are something for all generations of man through all perpetuity to observe. But we also keep the Holy Days because Jesus kept them during his earthly life, I won't give you the references for this they are far too easy to find for yourself. How that he went up repeatedly when he was twelve years old he went up with his family to keep the Feast of Passover. He went again and again to the Passover. He went up to Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles, so the festivals were demonstrably a part of Jesus life. But we also keep them because, and perhaps this is more germane to the discussion, because the early church did not believe the Holy Days were abolished at the cross, but the early church continued to observe the Holy Days down through time.

Now the most classic illustration of this is 1 Cor. 5 and I was really astonished once, I believe I was on the ship the S.S. United States on my way from New York to London reading Conybeare and Howsons' book about the Epistles of Paul when I came across this for the first time. Paul in 1 Cor. 5 begins to address a problem in the Corinthian church. Now, Conybeare and Howson and all the commentaries in fact will tell you that this epistle was written during the days of Unleavened Bread, it was either written just before and intended to be arriving in Corinth during the days of Unleavened Bread or it was written during the days of Unleavened Bread itself. So the connection is there, and the reason they say that is because there are numerous little metaphors, figures of speech, and allusions to the Passover to be puffed up, you know the allusions are in there repeatedly all the way in fact to a set of instructions about what to do and what not to do on the Passover night itself.

But he says, "it is commonly reported that there is fornication among you, and such fornication that is not so much as named among the Gentiles that one should have his

father's wife. And you are puffed up" this is one of those little allusions to the days of Unleavened bread, you are inflated like bread would be. "And you have not rather mourned that he has done this deed might be taken away from you. For I have verily as absent in body and present in spirit have judged already as though I were present concerning him that has done this deed." I've got the facts and this is my judgement, "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together in my spirit with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

So the church is going to put this man out, they are going to actually discipline this man, the idea behind it is that he would ultimately repent and change and come back which is exactly what happened, we learned that from 2 Cor. Then he makes this statement, "your glorying is not good, don't you know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?" Now in case you don't know how this was done, that originally the dough was kneaded and made up for bread without any leavening in it, and it was then laid out. So that the yeast that is in the air could fall upon it. And that yeast falling upon the bread after a period of time it was kneaded again and left and finally it would sour, and the souring or fermentation process would cause that bread to rise, it was a slow process but it worked and it created a rather tasty sour dough type of bread. Now before this loaf though, once it's kneaded and all ready, a little dollop is taken off of it rolled up and put in a cold place or cool place and kept there as a starter for the next loaf. That loaf is put in the oven, baked and enjoyed by the family. So then the next batch of bread the dough is made, is all put together mixed and kneaded and this little lump is taken out of its cool place and it is put into the larger lump of bread kneaded and worked again and laid aside. What happens?

Well the amount of yeast or fermentation that is in this begins to spread and spreads through the entirety of the big lump of dough. So that now you have another much more quickly fermented loaf of bread. You take a dollop off of that and put it away for the next loaf called a starter. You put in the oven bake it up and enjoy your bread. Paul simply makes an allusion to the leavening of bread. You got this one person in your congregation who is a sinner. Who is openly sinning and is causing the church to be evilly spoken of. Don't you know that a little leaven, leavens the whole lump? They all understood the analogy. Leaven is a type of sin and if you allow this thing to go on in the church in a public way it changes the way, it changes the standards by the which we live. People today are even wondering to what extent the changes in morals and government are beginning to effect the change into our own standards of morals in society of a whole. That if the government takes a light hearted attitude toward drugs in the light, what do you expect school children to do about that type of thing? So that, you do understand don't you? All of us in our congregation have got sin. It's not merely the presence of sin that is the problem. Yeast is everywhere all the time. It's always in the air regardless. But the fact is that a person among us who is a known and flagrant sinner, tolerated, will begin to change the way we look at sin. And it will begin to tempt you and others and so forth to think that if it's not important

enough for anyone to do anything about it, it may not be that important to God. A little leaven, leavens the whole lump.

So the allusion to the days of unleavened bread is made. He said then purge out the old leaven. Now what would you consider is the status of the Corinthian Church as to whether metaphorically Paul would have considered it leaven or unleavened when he writes this epistle. Leavened right. Because this man is there. So in order to get unleavened they need to get him out. Okay, purge out therefore the old leaven that you may be a new lump as you are unleavened. Ooops! Now are they unleavened or are they not? The fact is this sounds like double talk except for one thing, he says I want you to put this man out of your church so you can be unleavened spiritually or metaphorically as you are unleavened literally. You have all gotten the leavening out of your house. You made the diligent search to make sure it was all gone. Maybe, maybe not, you followed the old procedure of lighting a candle and going around your house looking for leaven. So you have been very careful and you have gotten all the leaven out of your house. Yet here you are tolerating leaven in the church of a spiritual type or a metaphorical type as sin as a type of leaven.

So he writes to them and says this, "Purge out the old leaven that you may be a new lump as you are unleavened for even Christ our Passover, is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the Feast." What in the world could he possibly be talking about except for the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Paul writes to a gentile church, largely gentile membership and says let's keep the Feasts not with the old leaven, not with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. The Corinthian Church was keeping the Days of Unleavened Bread. And Conybeare and Howson made it very clear. They said it's obvious from this passage of scripture that the Corinthian church was observing the Days of Unleavened Bread with their Jewish brethren at least to the extent of abstaining from leaven in their Love Feasts. He then goes on to say that over time this greatest of Jewish festivals became replaced by the greatest of Christian festivals, and doesn't realize even for a moment I think the significance of what he says. Of course the Days of Unleavened Bread and Passover got replaced by Easter and so forth. But the truth is here is a clear cut example that shows that a Gentile church, and we're probably looking at a neighborhood of 20 to 25 years after the ascension of Christ. Is still observing the Days of Unleavened Bread.

So, with the Gentile-dominated Corinthian church doing it, then we should expect probably that that was something that carried on after the ascension of Christ. Now, what's also interesting is, note the Christian symbolism of the days. They have gone beyond the meaning for Israel, of the Exodus, leaving Egypt, how you had to leave in haste, and all the things in reference to bondage into slavery of Egypt. They've gone beyond that and they've gone to a spiritual Christ centered, salvation oriented meaning for the days. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, let's keep the feast not with the old leaven but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and of truth. They observe them, still though to the extent of unleavening their homes. So, why do we keep the Holy Days? Well they're commanded of God, we keep them because Christ kept them, we keep them because the early church and

the apostles kept them and observed them and drew from them the metaphors and the salvation history of knowledge that they had. And they saw perhaps a higher symbolism for them, but they did not abandon the days.

Actually, like the Sabbath, the abandonment of the Holy Days by the early church had more to do with anti-Judaism than it did with basic theology. And the thing I think sometimes that even we might forget, it is not the Jewishness of the days that is important to us, it's the God centeredness of the days that is important. It is the fact that these are the days of Jehovah. Of the Eternal. Of the Creator. They're his, and that's why they are important to us. The Jewishness of the days is a good thing. It's a marvelous thing. And I think it actually is a very enriching thing in which adds enormous amount of color to the days. But it's a mistake to assume that it is in the Jewishness, or in the Jewish culture connected with the days, and the Jewish national history that makes these days important. It's not! It's that they are God's Holy Days and what he gave to Israel in connection with their own historical events adds a great deal of richness to them. Their problem is being able to get their heads up and see even beyond that. But aren't there scriptures that would seem to suggest that the Holy Days have been abolished? Isn't that something that a person should really consider? Well not really, there really aren't any, but there are some passages that some people tend to interpret that way.

Col. 2 is an interesting example, and perhaps one of the best illustrations that I can give you of the way people interpret these things. But it doesn't really come out quite the way they suggest it does. He says in verse 13 of Colossians 2 "You being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh." So who's he talking to? Gentiles. "Has he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses. Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." Now this is the famous scripture from which all the references to things that were nailed to the cross, they all come back to here. "We don't do that because it was nailed to the cross." You'll hear that in many Protestant publications and what have you. It's really a pity, it really is a pity that people don't take a little more care with this than that. And I'll show you what I mean. Now first of all he says to the Colossians, "you being dead in the uncircumcision" first of all "being dead in your sins," we don't really need the uncircumcision of your flesh, just stop with sins. "Has he made alive together with you, having forgiven you of all trespasses."

What is it that brings you back to life when you were dead in your sins? It's forgiving you of your trespasses right? Well how was that done? It was done by blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us. Now a simple construction of language ought to make this clear, but because of the twist that has been put on it by some theologians who don't want to observe the Holy Days and want to put them away. It comes out all different, but just look at this thing. He says he forgives you all trespasses by blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against you. How would nailing the law to the cross and doing away with the law, help in forgiving your sins? That doesn't follow. Because the truth

is if Jesus did away with the law at the cross, you haven't committed any sins. Did you know that? Sin is the transgression of the law. And if the law was abolished at the cross then there is no law and therefore it is not possible for you to commit sin. There is a logical absurdity in the whole thing. But the truth is, the blotting out of the handwriting of ordinances against us is a parallel structure with the previous statement which says "having forgiven you of all your trespasses."

Therefore the handwriting of ordinances against us has to do with having broken the law, there is a written record of your indebtedness for having broken the law, and that is what was nailed to the cross. Your sins were nailed to the cross, in the body of Christ not the law. It was not nailed to the cross at all. "The handwriting of ordinances that was against us that was contrary to us, took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross. And having spoiled principalities and powers he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." Now what in the world does verse 15 mean? And why is it even in here? What does it have to do with the context? Well, listen to what the New American Standard Bible does with this verse. "Having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us." In other words there is something, either you have committed a sin, there is a death certificate written out for you, it is the "certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us which was hostile to us. He has taken it out of the way having nailed it to his cross. When he had disarmed the rulers and authorities, he made a public display of them having triumphed over them through him."

What does that mean? Well it's the rulers and authorities that call you on the carpet, and judge you and condemn you for having broken the law. And so it is your transgressions that are blotted out not the law. Not it is funny that the only way that the law can come to be against us or hostile to us is when we have broken it. Why is it hostile to us to say you shall not lie? If you tell the truth in your life, in what way is that law against you? It's not against you at all, but if you lie, it is against you. Because you have broken it, and now they can write in your record of sins that you have lied and therefore you come under the penalty. Actually the only biblical parallel to this passage here is found in Num. 5 and the trial of jealousy.

Now if you have never read Numbers 5 I think you might find that fascinating to read. I have always been really interested in that passage and found it fascinating because of what it doesn't do. What it tells us is that if a man became jealous of his wife and he accused her of adultery, then he was going to have to bring her to the priest. And the priest had a very specific duty, and a very specific ceremony assigned for him. What he did was bring the woman in and have her sit in a chair, and he made a little drink for her composed of water and a little bit of dust off the floor of the tabernacle. And he just popped that in water and mixed that around for her to drink. Now, what do you think would be the effect of drinking a little bit of water with just a little bit of dust, a pinch of dust dropped in the water and stirred up in it. Nothing. Absolutely nothing. Okay, then what happens, by the way on this situation you've got a husband who is jealous of his wife and he's got no proof of any wrong doing on

her part. If he had any proof of wrong doing on her part, if he could actually call up witnesses who had seen it and knew that it had been done, he had another course of action available to him. This was where he had just had jealousy drop all over him, and he had no proof that his wife had done a thing in the world wrong. Okay, he takes her to the priest, and it says in verse 19 of Numbers 5, "The priest shall charge her by an oath and say to the woman, if no man has laid with you, and you have not gone aside to uncleanness with another instead of your husband. Be you free from this bitter water which causes the curse." It's supposed to be bitter water which causes a terrible curse. But all it is water with a little dust in it.

"And if you have gone aside to another instead of your husband, and if you are defiled, and some man has lain with you beside your husband, then the priest shall charge the woman with an oath of cursing. And the priest shall say to the woman, the Lord make you a curse and an oath among your people when the Lord does make your thigh to rot and your belly to swell." Sounds awful doesn't it? "Then this water that causes the curse shall go into your bowels to make your belly swell and your thigh to rot, and the woman shall say, amen, amen." What does that mean? It means she agrees. She says if I'm guilty of this may this happen to me. "And the priest shall write these curses in a book, and he shall blot them out with the bitter water." This is the only place in the bible you can go down to where there is a handwriting that's then blotted out, and this is the image that we're dealing with. It is a curse, it is a curse to come upon a person, like it says a certificate of debt against a person that's going to be carried out but that certificate of debt is blotted out. So he blots it out then, writes it down, blots it out with the water. Now what's really interesting about this whole trial here is that it involves the presumption of innocence. Because the writing in of the curse against this woman is blotted out before she drinks the water. It isn't left there as a permanent record against this woman. It is written before she drinks the water, it is blotted out before she drink the water, and the presumption is that she is innocent.

"And he shall cause the woman then to drink the bitter water that causes the curse, and the water that causes the curse shall enter into her and become bitter. And the priest shall take the jealousy offering out of the woman's hand, wave the offering before the Lord and offer it upon the altar. He takes a handful of the offering, even the memorial and burns it upon the altar. And afterward causes the woman to drink the water. And when he has made her to drink the water, then it shall come to pass that if she is defiled, if she has done trespass against her husband then the water that causes the curse shall enter her and shall become bitter and her belly shall swell and her thigh shall rot, and she shall be a curse among her people. And if she be not defiled, but be clean then she shall be free and conceive seed." Now what's fascinating about this is, to me, is that it takes a miracle from God, an absolute intervention on God's part to condemn this woman. Most of the old trials, trials by fire and what have you in ancient times, were ones where if you lived you were guilty, if you died you were innocent. But this one, you know most of the women that came in there were going to be found innocent, in fact I think very few husbands would bother because if they didn't have faith, if they didn't really have faith that God would show the truth, they wouldn't

bother with it. Because they would just expect, well she drank the water, nothing will happen.

But you know the effect of this? It was to blot that out and to clear this woman's reputation from anything hanging over, officially she was cleared. Whether you realize it or not, this is a woman's rights move, and a thing to protect women against unreasonable challenges or unreasonable charges of sin. One thing about it, again as I say the presumption of innocence I think is fascinating. Now, consider the rest of what Paul says in Colossians 2, now first of all he makes this statement about, he blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, or as the NASV says, "Having canceled out the certificate of debt, consisting of decrees against us." Which was written down against us, you know that's all canceled out, that's all blotted out, that's nailed to the cross, which is our sins nailed to the cross. Then he says, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink or in respect of an Holy Day or a New Moon or of the Sabbath days which were a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ. Now, the presumption of this is, that was all nailed to the cross, they are all just shadows, the reality is Christ, we don't have to do those things any more because they were shadows. But, wait just a minute. Here is the New Revised Standard version of this verse. "Therefore do not let any one condemn you in matters of food or drink." Why would anyone condemn you in matters of food or drink? What would that have to do with anything?

Actually, the Greek is a little awkward to put it this way in English. It says don't let anyone condemn you for eating and drinking. Why would anyone condemn you for eating and drinking? Well, if you know your history very well, you will realize that among the Greeks there was a very strong ascetic strain in their religions. And the idea was that in denying the body and denying yourself of foods and frequent fastings and all this type of thing. That you obtain some kind of spiritual edification. Now before I continue to explain let me just run down a little further in this. He says, having said don't let anybody judge you in these things, these are a shadow of things to come but the body is of Christ, he then says. "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshiping of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind. And not holding the head by which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together, increases with the increase of God." Now, therefore if you are dead with Christ from the elements of the world, why as though you are living in the world are you subject to this type of ordinance?" Well, what kind of ordinances? Gods? No, no, no, listen. "Touch not, taste not, handle not, all of which are to perish with the using, after the commandments and doctrines OF MEN!" Not God. Men! "Which things have a show of wisdom in will worship and humility and neglect of the body." It's all about asceticism.

Now, back to where I was. If he says then, I asked the question. Why would anyone condemn you for eating and drinking? Because they are ascetics. Greek asceticism was beginning to encroach in the church. "Don't let anyone condemn you for eating and drinking or for observing a Holy Day." That's what he is saying. Don't sit there and let people

condemn you for eating and drinking and observing Gods Holy Days, Sabbaths, New Moons and what have you. There is even a presumption here, that that church was observing New Moons. Now it would be up to you to figure out how they were doing the New Moons and what exactly they were doing and why. But that's another matter entirely, the presumption is, that's what they were doing or none of this would have meant anything to them. And he doesn't tell them, don't do it, what he says is, don't let anybody condemn you for it. Far from being a passage of scripture that would tend to do away. This passage of scripture tends to underline why we as a church ought to follow our first century brethren in observing the Holy days.

Now what is also interesting is the Holy Days are indeed a shadow of things to come, which is by the way establishes the fact that there is more than historical symbolism. See one of the presumptions is that all the Holy days were fulfilled. And therefore they were done away with Christ. But the truth is he now says that they were a shadow of things yet to come, which means the Holy days have not been fulfilled. If they're a shadow of things to come, they not only have historical fulfillment, they have prophetic fulfillment as well. But now notice another interesting thing. The body, that casts these shadows, is what? Look at it. It's Christ. These things are a shadow of things to come, but the body is Christ. That actually casts the shadow.

Now that does one more thing, that establishes the fact that there is a Christological symbolism in the Holy days. That the Holy Days all symbolize Christ, his ministry and his life and his work. They have more meaning for Christians than they ever had for Jews. Because we have theirs to go with ours. And of course I think some Jews are beginning to see precisely that, in the Messianic Judaism of this decade. And so why would we then look at a scripture like Col. 2:16 and think well this says the Holy days are done away with. The truth is this passage seems even more to establish the Holy Days, because it establishes that the Holy days are shadows of things yet in the future. And they also establish the fact that the body that casts those shadows is Christ. That they are related to him. And indeed it has really taken us a while I think to come to see it, but in the development of the symbolism and the typology of the Holy Days which have taken place in the church in recent years, we have finally come to the place I think, to where we really see Christ in all of the Holy days. We observe the Holy Days because they are commanded by God. We observe the Holy days because they were observed by our savior. We observe the holy days because they were observed by the early church. We observe the holy days because they teach us about God in history, in prophecy, in Christ, and in salvation. And to fail to observe them is a sin. Which slowly but surely separates us from God.

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