

CHAPTER 26

God's Holy Days and Feasts

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19-20 KJV).

Does the Bible establish whether we are to keep certain days holy to God? Were these days given to ancient Israel only? Are they binding today only on the Jewish people, while Christians are commanded to keep holidays such as Christmas and Easter? What is the truth?

How Time was Changed

We have examined the Sabbath day and the Christmas and Easter holidays in separate chapters of this book. In the prophecy chapters we examined the "little horn" of Daniel 7 and shown it to be a great religious hierarchy. In Daniel 7:25 it is stated that this hierarchy shall "think to change times and laws." This same power is pictured in Revelation 17 as ruling over the kings and kingdoms of the earth, and persecuting the true saints. In every manner possible, this power has changed time. **This "little horn" has changed God's time and holy days. Let us look at some examples.**

God begins his days at sunset. The "little horn" has changed it so the world now begins the day in the middle of the night. God begins his week with the ending of the true Sabbath, the seventh day of the week. The world begins the working week on Monday, the second day of God's week. God begins the months with the new moons, but this "little horn" has given the world a clumsy man-made calendar of heathen origin. God begins the year in the northern hemisphere in the early spring, when new life is budding everywhere in nature, but ancient Rome caused the world to begin the year in the middle of the dead of winter. God gave His people a true day of rest, designed to keep them in the knowledge and worship of the true God, a memorial of creation, the Sabbath day. But the "little horn" forced upon the world the observance of the day on which the pagans worshiped the sun, the first day of the week, called Sunday. **Ancient Rome's annual holidays have also been chained upon a deceived world. These include Christmas, New Year's, Valentine's Day, Easter, and Halloween as well as many more. Every one is a pagan day, every one is used to promote and stimulate the sale of merchandise in the commercial markets.**

How Were the Holy Days "Lost"

What were the factors, then, that led to the rise of what we know as "Christianity"

today, to the abandonment of the Sabbath, to the abandonment of the Passover, and bringing in things like Sunday and Easter? There were two major factors: 1) anti-Judaism; and 2) paganism. Anti-Judaism created the necessity to separate from the Jews and from the liturgical or sacred Hebrew calendar at the time when the Jewish religion was repressed and suppressed by the Roman authority.

This line of attack was successful because two ill fated Jewish revolts against the Roman government, in 66-73 A.D. and 132-135 A.D., made Judaism extremely unpopular throughout the Roman Empire. **After these two bloody and protracted struggles, the Romans held everything Jewish in contempt, especially the characteristic earmarks of Judaism, the weekly Sabbath, Passover, the Jewish New Year (Feast of Trumpets) and Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement).**

In the year 135 A.D. the Roman Emperor Hadrian promulgated the most repressive anti-Jewish, anti-Holy-Day legislation prohibiting categorically not only the practice of Judaism in general, but the practice of the Holy Days in particular. Why? Because the Jewish people were uprising, were rebelling everywhere in Cyrenaica, Egypt, Asia Minor, Palestine. This Roman Emperor Hadrian had to engage the best Roman army and bring them over to Palestine to suppress what is known as the Bar Kokhba Revolt.

And when he finally succeeded in suppressing this Palestinian revolt, capturing Jerusalem, he leveled Jerusalem, sprinkled the salt to indicate that it would never be rebuilt as a Jewish city, changed the name from Jerusalem to Aelia Capitolina, which was a pagan name, and expelled all the Jews. And that was the historical moment when the Emperor prohibited categorically, not only the practice of Judaism in general, but also the seventh-day Sabbath and Holy Days in particular. It was at that critical moment, when observing the Sabbath and the Holy Days was forbidden proscribed by Roman law, many Christians who came from a pagan background said, "Why should we suffer by observing Holy Days that are seen as Jewish? Why not distance ourselves from the Jews by changing the Sabbath to Sunday and Passover to Easter Sunday." The way they went about doing it is very interesting. The Bishop of Rome played a leading role in introducing theological, social, liturgical methods to lead Christians away from the observance of the Sabbath and Holy Days to the observance of what we would consider pagan holidays.

The second factor is the influence of paganism. The Christians said, "Why don't we adopt the day of the sun?" That was the day that was venerated in the pagan world, because the sun god became the most important god in the Roman pantheon. So they said by observing the day of the sun-that is the weekly Sunday and also the Easter Sunday-we can show ourselves to be closer to the pagan and more distant from the Jews. **What led to the change of the Sabbath and the Holy Days was *not* a commandment of Christ, was *not* a commandment of the apostles, was *not* the authority of the Jerusalem Church, was *not* the desire to honor the resurrection of Jesus on the first day of the week, but it was rather an interplay of social, political and pagan factors.**

Is expediency a legitimate motive for changing divine commandments, divine institutions? Did Jesus ever say, "If it is difficult to observe My commandments, if it is difficult to observe the Sabbath or the Holy Days, don't suffer for it, just change them." Did you ever find that in your Bible? We don't, but that is exactly what has happened. Time and again in the history of Christianity, churches have chosen expediency or compromise rather than commitment to the teaching of the Word of God. And the result is what we see today. The result is that Gods weekly Sabbath and Holy Days have become pagan holidays.

Attacks on God's Holy Days are nothing new. Early in the history of the New Testament Church, some of the Church's gentile membership came to consider the Holy Days merely Jewish observances. Those who retained the Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles were labeled "Judaizers."

Anti-Jewish bias, then, became a catalyst for false teachers to encourage the abandonment of the Sabbath and the Holy Days. Paul spoke of this in Acts 20:29-30 where it reads: "For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves" (NKJV). Paul later spoke of the great deception found in the church in II Corinthians 11:13 where it reads: **"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ" (NKJV).**

Here was the excuse for Roman Christianity to get rid of the Sabbath and God's feast days. By 90 A.D. Victor I, Bishop of Rome, threatened to excommunicate whole churches in Asia Minor still holding to the Passover. In 154 A.D. Polycarp, John's disciple, disputed with the bishop of Rome about keeping the Passover. Rome was busy implementing Easter Sunday as an annual commemoration of the resurrection, in place of the Passover, which commemorated the death of Jesus. When Emperor Constantine (306-337) allied himself with the Roman church to use it as a politically unifying force, state pressure compelled any "Judaizers" in the empire to abandon the Passover and the Sabbath, the true Lord's Day. Thus, 1260 years of constant persecution began for those remnants of God's true Church still keeping the Holy Days (Revelation 12:6). **Only a precious few knew the essentials of God's plan of salvation, which can be only fully understood through observing God's Holy Days.**

These ancient Roman annual holidays are mere counterfeits of God's true holy days, exactly as Sunday is a counterfeit of the true Sabbath. God did give his people annual holy days to be observed as well as the weekly Sabbaths. **The Christian of today does have God given holy days to observe, but few know about them. So the purpose of this chapter is to given you an introduction to the seven annual festivals of God.**

God's Annual Sabbaths Not Abolished

Most people have supposed that all the annual Sabbaths and feast days of Israel

were done away. And yet Church history shows that the early true Church did continue to keep and observe these annual holy days given by God for more than 400 years, perhaps much longer, after Christ's resurrection. Such arguments as "the annual Sabbaths are part of the law of Moses," or "they offered sacrifices on the annual Sabbaths," or "Colossians 2:16 does away with the annual Sabbaths," are not scriptural. **For the annual Sabbaths were not part of the law of Moses, but were observed before the ritualistic ordinances contained in the law of Moses were given.** Sacrifices were offered on the weekly Sabbath, and on every day of the year (Num. 28:3), but this does not do away with the Sabbath. Colossians 2:16 refers, not alone to the annual Sabbaths, but to the annual days, the monthly new moons, and the weekly Sabbath. This verse is not an example of what Christians should not be observing. God's holy days were still being observed after Christ's death and resurrection. Look what took place on the first feast of Pentecost.

Paul wrote the letter to the Christians at Colossae because some in the church were teaching that you could not reach God through Jesus Christ. These misguided teachers claimed that one could reach God by worshiping angels (Col. 2:18). Part of this process was a measure of self-abasement (Col. 2:23). This included strict regulations in matters of eating and drinking, as well as do's and don'ts in observance of the holy days, new moons and Sabbath days (Col. 2:20-21). The apostle Paul declared that they were in error (2:18) following the commandments and doctrines of men (2:22). Jesus Christ was the total and complete way to God. Jesus Christ transcends all (2:15).

Holy Days Prior to the Law of Moses

The true church began with the congregation of Israel in the wilderness in the days of Moses. The word translated "congregation" in the Old Testament is *ekklesia*, the same identical Greek word that is always translated "church" in the New Testament. **The holy days were observed before the ritualistic ordinances contained in the law of Moses. The law of Moses contained those ritualistic or ceremonial laws which were added, because of transgressions, to the Old Covenant, added until Christ, to teach and instill into them the habit of obedience.** These consisted of meat and drink offerings, various washings, and physical ordinances. Also they had the sacrifices, as a substitute for the sacrifice of Christ.

In the 12th chapter of Exodus, while the children of Israel were still in Egypt, long before any of the law of Moses had been given, prior to the time when God revealed to Moses and the Israelites He would make the Old Covenant with them, we find God's annual holy days being observed. **So God's annual holy days were observed before the Old Covenant or the law of Moses.** You will find a summary of these annual holy days or feasts in the 23rd chapter of Leviticus. God's feasts, or holy days, were commanded to be kept year after year, and forever. **The festivals of God, outlined in Leviticus 23, the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles, and the Last Great Day, are rooted firmly in the New Testament as well as in the Old. The truth is that Jesus Christ and the New Testament Church actively observed God's Holy Days, and true**

Christians are to be actively observing them today.

The Holy Days Picture God's Master Plan

God in His wisdom had a great purpose in giving His Church the seven annual Holy Sabbaths. **These holy days picture the plan of salvation God is working out on this earth through humans.** And that is the primary reason to keep the feasts. Without an understanding of the annual holy days, one cannot understand what man is or the reason for human life. God's annual holy days are also a foretaste of major times and events yet to come. They portray events in God's master plan for mankind.

Most churches teach that Christ finished the Plan of Redemption when He was crucified. But the death of Christ was the very first event in God's great plan for man's redemption. And so the Passover is the first of these events picturing to God's children year by year His great plan.

The Passover and Day's of Unleavened Bread

Let us understand the picture presented by the first Passover. The children of Israel were slaves in Egypt for over 400 years. They were not permitted to worship God as He had ordained, but forced to work seven days a week. They had lost sight even of the true Sabbath and that is why God had to reveal to them the Sabbath in the wilderness of Sin. Just as today, professing Christians have been deceived and have no knowledge of true time and God's days, as well as the true worship of God, so it was with the children of Israel in Egypt. Egypt pictures a type of sin. The people were delivered after God poured out his plagues upon Egypt. **God's people are in "Babylon" today, and are soon to be delivered after God pours His plagues upon modern Babylon.**

The Passover

The Passover is a memorial of the death angel's passing over the homes of the Israelites in Egypt, sparing the firstborn (Exodus 12:2-14). The lamb that was sacrificed then was a foreshadowing of Christ, the true Passover Lamb (I Cor. 5:7). In the New Testament, His sacrifice for our sins is pictured in the Passover emblems of bread and wine. The Passover occurs on the 14th day of Abib or Nisan, the first month of God's calendar. The Passover pictures the acceptance of Christ's blood for the remission of past sins. It pictures the crucified, the dead, Christ.

Passover pictures the death of Jesus Christ as the lamb of God, who shed his blood for the remission of sins for all people. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?...And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven

itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: **Nor yet that he should offer himself often**, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now **once** in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So **Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many**; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb 9:14, 22-28 KJV). "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect" (Heb 10:1 KJV). As we take the New Testament Passover each year with the new symbols of bread and wine, we renew our vows to God that we want to put sin out of our life and to be a new person in Jesus Christ.

There is much variation in the observance of the Passover, today erroneously called the Lord's Supper. Catholics celebrate the Lord's Supper and call it Mass or the Holy Eucharist. They believe: "the Blessed Sacrament is the real Body and Blood of Christ. The Blessed Sacrament is not bread and wine. The Priest actually changes the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ at the altar when he says Mass. After the priest says the words of consecration, there is no more bread and wine on the altar." (*Instructions In The Catholic Faith*, 1980, Lesson 31, page 93). So Catholic Priests continue to sacrifice Christ on the altar at each and every Mass. What did we just read in Hebrews above? "So Christ was offered **once** to bear the sins of many" (Heb. 9:28 NKJV). So that we are being fair, let us read some of these verses from a Catholic Bible, *The New American Bible*.

24 For Christ did not enter into a sanctuary made by hands, a copy of the true one, but heaven itself, that he might now appear before God on our behalf.

25 **Not that he might offer himself repeatedly**, as the high priest enters each year into the sanctuary with blood that is not his own;

26 **if that were so, he would have had to suffer repeatedly from the foundation of the world.** But now **once for all he has appeared** at the end of the ages **to take away sin by his sacrifice.**

Hebrews 9:24-26, *The New American Bible*, 1997.

There you can see that from a Catholic Bible that Christ is not to "offer himself repeatedly," meaning he would have had to suffer repeatedly. You can see that Christ appeared once, and suffered and died once, "to take away sin by his sacrifice." The Catholic Church also teaches that: "There is perhaps some good in every religion. However, **a religion, simply is not good in the eyes of God unless it is founded by God, has all of God's teachings**, and has what is necessary to lead all people to a holy life and to heaven." (*Instructions In The Catholic Faith*, 1980, Lesson 24, page 74). As we have already shown you the Catholic Church was not founded by God and certainly does not have all of God's teachings, often following the commandments of men. To the Catholic Church's credit, we may point out that she does teach the necessity of keeping the Ten Commandments. However, here too, she has been deceitful in leaving out the second commandment against worshipping idols. (See *Instructions In The Catholic Faith*, 1980, Lesson 41, page 133) It is in the Bible and you can read it in your Catholic

Bible.

4 You shall not carve idols for yourselves in the shape of anything in the sky above or on the earth below or in the waters beneath the earth;

5 you shall not bow down before them or worship them. For I, the LORD, your God am a jealous God, inflicting punishment for their fathers' wickedness on the children of those who hate me, down to the third and fourth generation;
Exodus 20:4-5, *The New American Bible*, 1997.

Oh, she has 10 commandments in her list, but she left out the second and just divided the tenth commandment into two. We have shown you where the Catholic Church transferred the Sabbath day to Sunday and changed the observance of Passover to Easter. She also did away with the observance of all of God's Holy Days. And these are just a few examples of the major errors of the Catholic Church. **How long will people continue to follow this Church like dumb blind lambs to slaughter? Will you also suffer in her destruction? Read your Bible people!** Can you trust a Church that does not teach and follow all of the Bible? God calls his people to come out of Babylon! People, get out of this confusion, this mixture of Christianity and Paganism! Okay, let's get back to our subject.

Today different church denominations take this sacred ordinance different ways. Some take the Lord's Supper once a month, some twice a month, others every Sunday. Let us examine the passages showing the first institution of this ordinance. Notice Luke 22:14, 19-20: "When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him...And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you" (KJV). Notice it was "when the hour was come," that Jesus first introduced the bread and wine. There was a definite time, a definite hour, when He held this supper, setting us an example. Notice too, He commanded them to observe it, "This do in remembrance of me," Jesus said. It was then a memorial in memory of His death. He instituted it on this tragic night, the very eve of His death. As the Passover lamb of the Old Testament was killed in the evening (Exodus 12:6) of the 14th day, so Christ our passover was also slain in the evening of the 14th day. Some misunderstand I Corinthians 11:26 which says: "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup," and interpret to say "take it as often as you please." But it does not say that! It says "as often" as we observe it, "ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." We do it in remembrance of the Lord's death. And memorials are always observed annually. **The Passover or Lord's supper is to be observed annually once a year on the evening of the 14th of Abib or Nisan.**

On delivering His people from Egypt (sin), God revealed to Israel a new form of the calendar. So God said, "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months..." (Exodus 12:2). This first month in God's calendar was called Abib (Deut. 16:1). Some few today keep the beginning of God's feasts of salvation by observing the Passover, but never go on to know the depth and riches of God's grace pictured by the following feasts. Christ is not only the author or beginner, but he is the finisher of our salvation. **The Feast of the Days of Unleavened Bread follows immediately after the Passover.**

The Days of Unleavened Bread.

This is a feast of seven days of eating unleavened bread and it begins after sunset after the Passover. God's days are always calculated from sunset to sunset. **The first night commemorates the night Israel started out of Egypt and it is the "night to be much observed"** (Exodus 12:42). It is symbolic of newly converted Christians departing from sin. Egypt is God's illustration of the bondage in which sin puts us. The final day pictures baptism (I Cor. 10:2). The first and the last of the seven festival days are annual Sabbaths, often called High Days. **The yearly observance of these seven days pictures our complete deliverance from sin.** Personal sin is symbolized by leavening, which puffs up and spreads out. **Though Christ's blood for the remission of sins is pictured by the Passover, if we fail to go ahead and put sin out of our lives, we make a mockery of Christ's sacrifice.**

These Days of Unleavened Bread portray our earnest efforts to root out sin from our lives by the removing of all leavening from our homes. This physical house cleaning impresses upon us the importance of spiritual house cleaning or the putting away and overcoming of sin.

God's Purpose

Do you see God's purpose in all of this? Do you grasp the true significance and wonderful meaning? The Passover only pictures the death of Christ for the remission of sins that are past (Romans 3:25). The acceptance of his blood does not forgive sins we may later commit, it does not give us license to continue in sin. Therefore when we accept it, our sins are forgiven only up to that time, that is only past sins. Paul stated it this way, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid..." (Roman 6:1-2). And "knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Roman 6:6). "What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid" (Romans 6:15). (All KJV).

The Passover pictures God delivering us from the power of sin. The seven days of Unleavened Bread following the Passover picture to us the complete putting away of sin and the keeping of the Commandments, after past sins are forgiven. Seven is God's number symbolizing completeness. They picture the life and work of the risen Christ, who ascended to the throne of God where He is now working on our behalf as High Priest cleansing us of sin and delivering us completely from its power. To observe the Passover alone, and then fail to observe the Days of Unleavened Bread means, in the symbolism, to accept Christ's blood, and then to continue in sin, to erroneously say the law is done away, that we are under grace alone, meaning license, to continue in sin! We cannot keep the Commandments in our own power and strength. But Christ in us can keep them. We must rely on Him in faith.

Now let's carry our analogy farther. The Israelites did not get far out of Egypt

until Pharaoh pursued after them (Exodus 14:4-31). Pharaoh is a picture of Satan and his army is Satan's demons. Satan and his demons immediately pursue after the newly begotten sons of God. The Israelites were trapped and helpless but God would fight for them. We cannot of ourselves conquer Satan and sin, but God can. God delivered them by parting the Red Sea. The wall of water of the Red Sea on their right and on their left were making a path, guiding them in the true way and protecting them. The waters are a symbol of the Holy Spirit. But when Pharaoh and his army attempted to follow after Israel, these same waters completely covered them, as the Holy Spirit removes and covers our sins, and the Israelites saw them no more.

Are They Binding Today?

Now turn back to Exodus 12 where the Passover is discussed. Notice beginning verse 14: "So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord throughout your generations. You shall keep it a feast by an everlasting ordinance " (KJV). The Passover was a feast day, a memorial, to be kept forever. The New Testament Church of God has always kept this day, with the new symbols of unleavened bread and wine instead of a slain lamb.

Notice now beginning with verse 16: "And in the first day [the 15th of Abib], there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day [21st of Abib] there shall be an holy convocation to you...And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt; therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever" (KJV).

There you have it! It was before the ceremonial law of Moses. Both Passover and Unleavened Bread are here clearly established before any of the ceremonies of the later law of Moses. It was established while the Israelites were still in Egypt, before one word of the ceremonial law of Moses had been given or written, before God even proposed the Old Covenant! What the law of Moses or the Old Covenant did not institute cannot be done away with. This alone ought to prove that the holy days and the seven days of Unleavened Bread are binding today, and forever.

Thus we see that the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread was ordained and established forever prior to the Old Covenant. They existed before the law of Moses and are carried over into the New Testament, and therefore are binding today. Originally there were no sacrifices, and no meat and drink ordinances, held on these days. See Jeremiah 7:22-23. These holy days were instituted as memorials. When the law of Moses came, with its sacrificial ordinances and meat and drink offerings, then these sacrifices were instituted temporarily until Christ. Some were held daily, some on the weekly Sabbath, and some on the first of each month, and some on each of the annual holy days. Notice the sacrifices were added to the Holy Days. The sacrifices were typical, and they came with the law of Moses and they were done away with it. But the days on which they were held were not typical, did not come with the law of Moses and were not done away with. **The Sabbath and Holy Days existed before the ritualistic law of Moses. In God's sight, neither the Sabbath or the annual Holy Days of God**

are done away with.

Commanded in the New Testament

If we wished to show a New Testament command more direct than any other for keeping these annual holy days it would have to be I Corinthians 5:7-8. But first notice Matthew 26:5. The chief priests and the scribes, conspiring to kill Jesus said: "Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people." They hastened so they could take and have Him killed the day before the feast, on the 14th of Abib. Mark 14:2 tells us the same. And Mark 14:1 (KJV) tells us that "after two days was the feast of the passover and of unleavened bread." Now to establish that the feast day was the day after the Passover festival, and that it was the high Sabbath day, the day after Jesus was crucified notice John 13:29 and John 19:31. The Passover on the 14th was the preparation for the feast. See Matthew 27:62; Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54; and John 19:14. The feast was the following day, the 15th of Abib (Nisan). The 15th was called a High Sabbath in John 19:31, and means an annual holy day. Now let us examine I Corinthians 5:7-8 (KJV): "...For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us; therefore **let us keep the feast...**" Notice it. Because Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed, therefore let us of the New Testament dispensation, because Christ had died, **keep the feast**. This feast was the 15th. In a larger sense, the feast included all seven of the days of Unleavened Bread, included the second high Sabbath or holy day on the 21st of Abib. We cannot deny this if we are yielded to the Lord and the Word of God. **There it is, in plain language, in the New Testament saying because Christ was crucified as our Passover, let us keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread.**

Paul and the New Testament church kept the Days of Unleavened Bread. In Acts 20:6 (KJV) we read: "We sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread." Paul and his companions had plainly observed the days of unleavened bread. Notice also Acts 12:3 (KJV): "Then were the days of unleavened bread." This was years after the crucifixion. The days of unleavened bread still existed, or the Holy Spirit would not have inspired such words.

Pentecost

Pentecost is a Greek word meaning fiftieth. The day of Pentecost is determined by counting fifty days from the day during the Days of Unleavened Bread on which the wave sheaf was offered in Old Testament times (Leviticus 23:15), the day on which the resurrected Christ was first seen alive. It always occurs on a Sunday during Sivan, the third month of the sacred calendar. **In the Old Testament, this festival was termed the "Feast of Firstfruits" and the "Feast of Weeks."** The Israelites observed it for some 1500 years before the name of the day was actually fulfilled.

With the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the harvest of the firstfruits began. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. **He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him"** (John 14:16-18,20-21 KJV). We can see Christ in Pentecost as the first part of the spiritual first harvest.

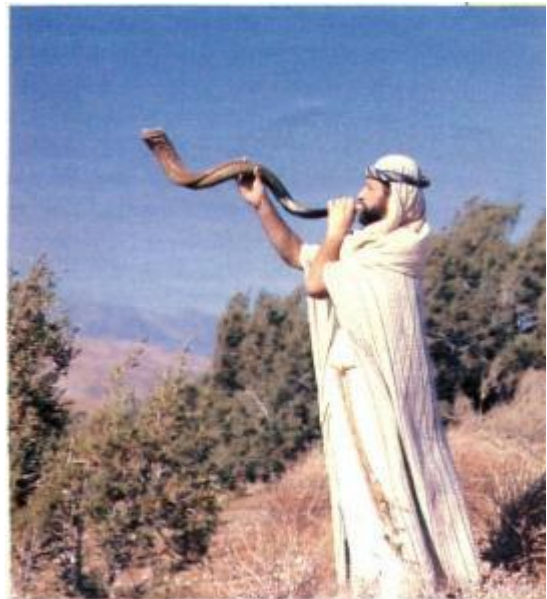
The day of Pentecost after Christ's death and resurrection marked the beginning of the New Testament Church of God. Thousands received the Holy Spirit in the first few weeks of the New Testament Church. **God gave us this festival in order to reveal to them that this present dispensation is only the first, preliminary harvest of souls. All who have been called from the days of Jesus Christ until now represent the firstfruits of God's salvation.**

Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread largely symbolize events now already past. All of the fall festivals represent things to come. However, Pentecost symbolizes that part of the process of fulfillment of God's plan which is underway right now, in this Church age, but also that function of the Holy Spirit which is both past and future. It also shows that there is a great fall harvest of salvation yet to come.

Pentecost was observed by the New Testament Church of God. Paul wrote in I Corinthians 16:8 (KJV), "But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost." In Acts 20:16 (KJV) we find Paul hurrying "to be in Jerusalem by the day of Pentecost." And if all of Jesus disciples had not been observing the day of Pentecost just after Jesus' resurrection they would never have received the Holy Spirit as "cloven tongues of fire" (Acts 2:1-4). It was the first Pentecost after everything that was abolished had already been done away. Yet, we find the Church keeping Pentecost and all of God's annual holy days

The Feast of Trumpets

The Feast of Trumpets pictures perhaps the greatest event in the history of this world; the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The Feast of Trumpets occurs on the first day in the seventh month. "In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation. Ye shall do no servile work therein..." (Lev. 23:23-25 KJV). Notice the day is a memorial of the blowing of trumpets. A trumpet is a symbol of war (Joel 2:1). It is also a symbol of victory, in this case the victory of Christ at his second coming. **This day points forward to the day when the last trumpet will sound (Rev. 11:15-19) and the dead in Christ will rise to meet Him (I Thes. 4:16-17 & I Cor. 15:52). Christ will then conquer the angry nations who**



The shofar or ram's horn is traditionally blown on the festival of Trumpets to herald the coming of the Messiah.

would presume to fight against Him. But the title of this festival is the Feast of Trumpets. "Trumpets" is plural. **The successive angelic trumpet blasts and accompanying cataclysmic events on a worldwide scale of Revelation will serve as God's final warnings to a sin ravaged world. Then will come the great trumpet blast that will usher in the rule of the Kingdom of God on this earth.** But first Christ must reconcile the world to him and exile the source of all sin. That is shown in the very next festival.

The Day of Atonement

The Day of Atonement pictures a wonderful and great event, to take place after the Second Coming of Christ. **The Day of Atonement pictures the chaining of Satan for a thousand years** (Rev. 20:1-3). The sixteenth chapter of Leviticus describes in symbolism, this crucial event of future world history in great detail. The goat that God selected by lot to be killed for the sin offering of the people represented Christ. Thus the sins of the people were born by the goat, even as Christ, finally, once and for all, bore our sins on the cross. The live goat, called the Azazel goat or the scapegoat, upon whom all the sins of Israel were to be confessed, and which was led into the desolate wilderness, represents Satan the devil being kept in restraint for a period of a thousand years. It is he who is ultimately responsible for all angelic and human sin. **There could be no millennium without his banishment. It is only after the devil is chained that a thousand years of peace and prosperity can commence.**

This day is a day of abstaining from food and drink called "the fast" in New Testament times. In Acts 27:9, it is recorded that Paul was on his perilous sea voyage to Rome, "when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past...(KJV)." **The fast refers to the Day of Atonement, the 10th day of the seventh month. Fasting helps us realize our own human weakness and need for God.**

The Day of Atonement pictures the day in the future when the punishment for sin will be placed justly on the head of its instigator, Satan, the devil. Mankind will then become "at one," or in complete accord, with God, all our sins having been forgiven and forgotten. "And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison" (Rev 20:2-3,7).

The Feast of Tabernacles

Now we come to the sixth festival; the Feast of Tabernacles or Feast of Booths as it is sometimes called. **The Feast of Tabernacles is to be kept for seven days, beginning the 15th of the seventh month of God's sacred calendar (Leviticus 23:33-35).** Notice it too was commanded forever: "It shall be a statute for ever in your generations: ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month" (Leviticus 23:41 KJV). Here we

find pictured those final culminating events in God's great plan. After Christ has died for our sins to redeem mankind, after He has sent us the Holy Spirit and picked out a people for His Name to become kings and priests through the thousand years, after His glorious Second Coming, after He has finally restored the redeemed by placing all the sins upon the head of Satan their real author, making us finally joined in one, then we are ready for the actual making of the New Covenant, the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth and the great harvest of souls for a thousand years. **This festival is a picture of the Millennium, a period of one thousand years, when resurrected Christians, then immortal, will rule the earth under Christ (Rev. 5:10; 2:26).**

Turn to the 20th chapter of Revelation. The beginning few verses document the thousand year earthly reign of Christ. This period of idyllic peace and prosperity is pictured in the seven-day observance of the Feast of Tabernacles. It symbolizes the arrival of the Kingdom of God on earth. It ushers in a period of peace and plenty such as this world has never seen. A new age will have begun. At last man will be ruled directly by immortal spirit beings. No longer will the Caesar and Hitlers of this world plague mankind.

The accounts of the transfiguration in Matthew 17 and Luke 9:28-36 explains that both Moses and Elijah appeared in glory with Christ, and indicates that they will be resurrected to rule with Christ during the Millennium. They with all the other prophets of old and all true Christians will constitute the firstfruits of the family of God. **This resurrected family of God will then rule the earth under Jesus Christ for one thousand years (Rev. 20:4-6).**

Notice the 16th verse of Zechariah 14 (KJV): "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles." After Christ returns, the nations of mortal gentiles, who have not yet received salvation, will come to Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. Yes, the festival was not abolished at the cross, but commanded forever, and **God's true Church will be keeping it right up to the Millennium, after which even the Gentiles will be taught to observe it, and all of God's annual Holy Days.**

During the Millennium, the Kingdom of God into which we may be born will rule the nations that are composed of mortal men. The billions of mortal men alive during the Millennium will still be heirs to the Kingdom of God. They will not have inherited it as long as they remain mortal flesh, for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God" (I Cor. 15:50 KJV). "Ye must be born again" of the Spirit to inherit the Kingdom, said Jesus in John 3:7 (KJV). The contention, held by some sects, that mortal human beings in the Millennium will remain flesh and blood forever is plainly denied by the Feast of Tabernacles, for the festival itself points toward an eternal inheritance. After a period of overcoming and growing in knowledge and wisdom they will inherit immortality in the Kingdom. After Jesus is seated on His throne in glory, and He gathers the nations before Him, He will separate "his sheep from the goats" and say to the sheep "inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew

25:31-34 KJV).

The Feast of Tabernacles is also called the "Feast of Ingathering" because of its fall harvest time setting. **It is symbolic of the great harvest of souls at this future time of the Millennium, when the whole world will become full of the knowledge of God (Isa. 11:9). All will have their opportunity for salvation in the millennium.** This is the time when God will finally set His hand to save the whole world. But what of those who have previously lived and died with no opportunity for salvation, most never even having heard the name of Jesus? A final one-day festival answers this question.

The Last Great Day

The day following the Feast of Tabernacles is called the Last Great Day and is symbolic of a still more joyous occasion in the future. **The rest of the dead who never had their eyes opened to the truth in their former life will be resurrected to mortal life again after the millennium (II Cor. 4:4 & Rev. 12:9). This will be their first real chance to understand the true gospel, overcome and gain eternal life.** They will live a life complete with trials and test similar to those of true Christians today (I Peter 4:17). This day is symbolically described as the Great White Throne Judgment in Revelation 20. Those who overcome with the help of God's Holy Spirit will join God's family, living forever with those who were saved during the Church's activity in Satan's world and those who overcame in the succeeding thousand-year rule of Christ.

Holy Days in the New Testament

To whom or what authority should a Christian turn for enlightenment on the issue of which days to observe as religious festivals. Why not begin with the very founder of Christianity, Jesus Christ. Some forget the fact that Jesus Christ was a Jew (Hebrews 7:14). He was reared in a home faithful in obeying the Old Testament commandments and holy days: "Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast" (Luke 2:41-42 KJV).

Jesus Christ kept the Passover and the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread that followed (verse 43). Christ did not annul these Holy Days during his ministry. Christ never instituted the days of Good Friday, Ash Wednesday, and Easter Sunday. Notice, "Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover... And He sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the Passover, that we may eat" (Luke 22:1,8 KJV). Here was Jesus perfect opportunity to cancel the Passover and introduce Easter or some other festival, but he did not. No, Jesus commanded his disciples, the foundation of the Church of God, to prepare the traditional Passover and to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. See also John 7:8 and 14:15. Indeed Christ did keep and was the Passover lamb sacrificed for us: **"For even Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast..." (I Corinthians 5:7-8 KJV). "Let us keep the feast" Paul told his gentile converts.** Could anything be clearer? By contrast, professing Christianity cannot find even one clear scripture to command Christians to observe

Christmas, Easter, or Lent.

The gospel of John records many examples of Jesus keeping the Holy days. It is John who records Jesus' statement that "Salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22 KJV). Let us look at some of these records. "And the Jews' Passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem" (John 2:13 KJV). "Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, in the feast day, many believed in His name" (John 2:23 KJV). "After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem" (John 5:1 KJV). This feast was probably the Feast of Trumpets based on the topics discussed with the Jews. "Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand" (John 7:2 KJV). Jesus Christ, head of the Church, kept the Feast of Tabernacles by instituting powerful preaching services (John 7:14,28). "No man ever spoke like this Man!" said the officers sent to arrest him (John 7:46 NKJV). And "In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (John 7:37 KJV). The Last Great Day is the seventh festival of God. John painstakingly recorded Christ's dedication to observing the Holy Days.

Here are three reasons Jesus observed all seven annual Holy Days:

1. Devout Jews who worshiped the Creator God did, and Jesus was a devout Jew.
2. The law commanded that the Holy Days be observed, sin is the transgression of the law, and Christ did not sin.
3. Jesus was the one who gave the Holy Days to Israel. He was YHWH, the God of Israel, the Word made flesh. He was only doing what He Himself told Israel to do centuries earlier.

Obviously the Church of God need not feel defensive about celebrating these so-called Jewish festivals. The evidence is overwhelming. **The gospels, the book of Acts, and the epistles teach and reiterate the Holy Days of Leviticus 23.** We have seen that Jesus clearly kept the Holy Days. We have already quoted many examples of the disciples and the Church observing the Holy Days from Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts. Paul clearly observed the Holy Days (Acts 24:14) and taught them to the gentiles (I Thessalonians 2:14).

But how can we know that these festivals are for the Church today? Remember three things. First, Jesus Christ was our example (I Peter 2:21). What he did, we must do. Second, Jesus commanded His own disciples to observe the Passover, Unleavened Bread, and the Feast of Tabernacles (Luke 22:8, John 7:8, 14:15). These men were the foundation of the New Testament Church. Jesus' last command to His disciples was "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19-20 KJV). Jesus commanded His disciples to observe the Holy Days. The disciples, in turn taught Holy Day observance to the Church. This same Church still exists in this end time. Third, these Holy Days were commanded to be observed forever. In Zechariah 14:19 we saw that the Feast of Tabernacles would be kept in the Millennium.

Jesus said "...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" (Luke 22:15-16 NKJV). So we see the Church of God must keep the Holy Days forever and they will be observed in the coming Millennium. **By observing the Sabbath and these annual feasts, we take time out to celebrate what God has done, what God is doing, and what God will do for us.** That is the real truth, straight from your Bible. Now it is up to you to find a church observing God's Holy Days or change the church you are in.

We Can See Jesus Christ in Each of These Holy Days

The Sabbath pictures the sign between God and His people. It is a sign by which we know that he is God. The Sabbath is a weekly memorial and reminder of God and His power to create! Passover pictures the death of Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God, who had to shed His blood for the remission of sin for all of mankind. During the Days of Unleavened Bread we eat unleavened bread for seven days. It pictures the putting away of sin out of our lives and the putting on of Jesus Christ. We imbibe of His nature, His character, and His laws. (See Rom 6:4-13). The Wavesheaf pictures, not the resurrection, but the resurrected Christ being accepted of God as the very first human being to be actually born of God—the first fruit of the first harvest of brethren. "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (1 Cor 15:20,23 KJV). Fifty days after the wavesheaf was offered is the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came to help the people of God. We can see Christ in Pentecost as the first part of the spiritual first harvest.

The Feast of Trumpets pictures the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of Lords. As soon as the work of gathering in the firstfruits (pictured by Pentecost) is completed at the end of this present age, then Christ will begin to set up His Kingdom on this earth. The Day of Atonement pictures a wonderful and great event, to take place after the Second Coming of Christ. The Day of Atonement pictures the chaining of Satan for a thousand years. The Feast of Tabernacles pictures the millennium. To show His plan, God took the yearly material harvest seasons in Palestine as the picture of the spiritual harvest of souls. The second harvest, produced by the "latter rain," comes in the fall. Just as Pentecost pictures the early harvest—this church age, so the feast of ingathering or tabernacles pictures the late harvest—the great harvest of people in the millennium! The millennium is a time when Jesus shall be king over the whole earth. We see a kingdom, heavenly in origin, principle, and authority, set up on earth, with Jerusalem as the capital. It is to be established first with regathered and restored Israel, including both houses of Israel, the Jews and the Lost 10 Tribes of Israel.

Table 1

Biblical Holy Days in the New Testament		
Biblical Observance	Commanded in Old Testament	Observed by Jesus Christ, the apostles or the Church in the New Testament
Passover	Leviticus 23:5	Matthew 26:2, 17-19 Mark 14:12-16 Luke 2:41-42 Luke 22:1, 7-20 John 2:13,23 John 6:4 John 13:1-30 1 Corinthians 11:23-29
Feast of Unleavened Bread	Leviticus 23:6-8	Matthew 26:17 Mark 14:12 Luke 2:41-42 Luke 22:1-7 Acts 2:3-4 Acts 20:6 1 Corinthians 5:6-8
Feast of Pentecost	Leviticus 23:25-22	Acts 2:1-21 Acts 20:16 1 Corinthians 16:8
Feast of Trumpets*	Leviticus 23:23-25	Matthew 24:30-31 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 Revelation 11:15
Day of Atonement	Leviticus 23:26-32	Acts 27:9
Feast of Tabernacles	Leviticus 23:33-43	John 7:1-2, 8, 10, 14 Acts 18:21
Last Great Day	Leviticus 23:36	John 7:37-38
*Although the Feast of Trumpets is not mentioned by name in the New Testament, the theme of the day is mentioned by the sounding of trumpets announcing Jesus Christ's return.		

The seventh festival of God, The Great Last Day, pictures the final resurrection,

when all who have ever lived have the opportunity to learn and live the way of the True God and His Son Jesus Christ. **"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works" (Rev 20:11-13 KJV).** This festival also pictures the final judgement before the new heaven and new earth comes down from the Father. **"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev 20:15 KJV).** We are looking for the Plan of Redemption to be fulfilled! We see the resurrections in the harvest plan God has shown in His Holy Days.

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God" (Rev 21:1-3 KJV). "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ" (Col. 2:16-17 KJV).

We Can See Both a Memorial and a Prophecy in the Holy Days

We have seen that the feasts of God are both a memorial and a prophecy! As we look at the Old Testament, God tells them to keep the feasts as a memorial. Now, notice the feast days from the New Testament point of view. We see Christ in each feast day and the prophecy of the true plan of God for all of mankind as pictured by the annual harvests. **God's Holy Days show that all mankind will have the opportunity to know the true God and His way to eternal life. In the New Testament the Holy Days are prophetic—a shadow of things to come!**

Table 4: God's Holy Day Calendar

Year	First Day of Year Abib 1	Passover	Feast of Unleavened Bread	Pentecost	Feast of Trumpets	Day of Atonement	Feast of Tabernacles	Last Great Day
2020	Mar 26	Apr 8	Apr 9-15	May 31	Sep 19	Sep 28	Oct 3-9	Oct 10
2021	Mar 14	Mar 27	Mar 29-Apr 3	May 16	Sep 7	Sep 16	Sep 21-27	Sept 28
2022	Apr 2	Apr 15	Apr 16-22	Jun 5	Sep 26	Oct 5	Oct 10-16	Oct 17
2023	Mar 23	Apr 5	Apr 6-12	May 28	Sep 16	Sep 25	Sep 30-Oct 6	Oct 7
2024	Apr 9	Apr 22	Apr 23 -29	Jun 16	Oct 3	Oct 12	Oct 17-23	Oct 24
2025	Mar 30	Apr 12	Apr 13-19	Jun 1	Sep 23	Oct 2	Oct 7-13	Oct 14
2026	Mar 19	Apr 1	Apr 2-8	May 24	Sep 12	Sep 21	Sep 26-Oct 2	Oct 3
2027	Apr 8	April 21	Apr 22-28	June 13	Oct 2	Oct 11	Oct 16-22	Oct 23

- In biblical reckoning, days begin in the evening, when the sun goes down, and are counted from evening to evening. **Thus all God's festivals begin the evening just before the dates listed in this table.** For example, in 2020, Passover is observed Tuesday evening, April 7th after sundown.
- All dates are for days starting at sunset at Jerusalem.
- Abib is the first lunar month whose 14th day falls after the March equinox. (Num. 9:2-3)
- Trumpets is the first day of the 7th lunar month starting with Abib.

Table 2: List of Scriptural References to God's Holy Days in the New Testament

PASSOVER				
MAT 26:2	MAT 26:17-19	MAR 14:1	MAR 14:12	MAR 14:14
MAR 14:16	LUK 2:41	LUK 22:1	LUK 22:7-8	LUK 22:11
LUK 22:13	LUK 22:15	JOH 2:13	JOH 2:23	JOH 6:4
JOH 11:55	JOH 12:1	JOH 13:1	JOH 18:28	JOH 18:39
JOH 19:14	1CO 5:7	HEB 11:28		

LEAVEN				
MAT 13:33	MAT 16:6	MAT 16:11	MAR 8:15	LUK 12:1
LUK 13:21	1CO 5:6-8	GAL 5:9		

FEAST				
MAT 26:2	MAT 26:5	MAT 26:17	MAT 27:15	MAR 14:1-2
MAR 15:6	LUK 2:41-42	LUK 5:29	LUK 14:13	LUK 22:1
LUK 23:17	JOH 2:8-9	JOH 2:23	JOH 4:45	JOH 5:1
JOH 6:4	JOH 7:2	JOH 7:8	JOH 7:10-1	JOH 7:14
JOH 7:37	JOH 10:22	JOH 11:56	JOH 12:12	JOH 12:20
JOH 13:1	JOH 13:29	ACT 18:21	1CO 5:8	1CO 10:27
2PE 2:13	JUD 1:12			

FEAST OF UNLEAVENED				
MAT 26:17	MAR 14:12	LUK 2:41-42	LUK 22:1	1CO 5:8

FEAST OF TABERNACLES				
JOH 7:1-2	JOH 7:8-14	ACTS 18:21		

PENTECOST				
ACT 2:1	ACT 20:16	I CO 16:8		

ATONEMENT				
ACT 27:9				

LAST GREAT DAY				
JOH 7:37	JUD 1:5			

Table 3: List of Scriptural References to God's Holy Days in the Old Testament

OLD TESTAMENT FEASTS				
GEN 19:3	EXO 12:17	EXO 13:6	EXO 23:15	EXO 34:18
EXO 34:25	LEV 23:5-43	LEV 23:36	NUM 28:17	DEU 16:13
DEU 16:16	DEU 31:10	2CH 8:13	2CH 30:13	2CH 30:21
2CH 35:17	EZR 3:4	EZR 6:22	EZE 45:21	HOS 12:9
ZEC 14:16	ZEC 14:18-19			