

March 22, 2018

Dear Brethren and Friends,

*Knowledge* of the weekly Sabbath and the annual Holy Days of God (which are also called "Sabbaths" in the Bible) has been the anchor of biblical truth throughout history. This *understanding* has been the key for remaining faithful to God in a world blinded by the deception of Satan.

When God delivered His people from slavery in Egypt, He revealed "the Feasts of the LORD"—beginning with Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Exodus 12 and 13). Next, He showed again when and how to keep the weekly Sabbath (Exodus 16). As the Israelites continued their journey, other Feasts were revealed (Exodus 23 and 34; Leviticus 23; Deuteronomy 16).

WHY did God command His people to observe these holy times? God gives the answer:

"Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: "Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you"" (Exodus 31:13).

However, over time, Israel proved to be unfaithful in keeping the Sabbath and the other of God's Feasts. As a consequence, they lost contact with God. Only rarely did His people turn back to Him to once again observe what He had commanded. That happened in the time of several of the kings of Judah—and it is recorded that especially Hezekiah and Josiah both reinstated the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread—and while these kings led the people to be obedient, God blessed the nation of Judah.

Following their return from Babylonian captivity, the Jews once again turned to God and established "observance" of the Sabbath and Holy Days—as is recorded in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah. During the time of Jesus Christ, the Jews were still "observing" the Sabbath and the Holy Days.

They were "observing" but not keeping the Sabbath or the Holy Days correctly! Jesus faithfully KEPT the Sabbath and the annual Holy Days in the right way, but the religious leaders of that time even accused Jesus of not keeping the Sabbath—because, among other reasons, He healed people on the Sabbath (John 9:16). Note what Jesus said of them:

... "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: "This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do" (Mark 7:6-8).

The majority of the Jews rejected Jesus (John 1:11), and in so doing, they failed to grasp the true meaning of the Passover. Only those who believed that Jesus was the Messiah who spoke with godly authority, and who continued to follow Him, understood.

From that point, the significance of the Feast days of God was revealed to the Church of God. Paul taught about the Feast of Unleavened Bread applying to the removal of sin from our lives (1 Corinthians 5:6-8); the giving of God's Holy Spirit took place on the Feast of Pentecost (Acts 2); and the prophetic meaning of the Fall Holy Days is understood and proclaimed by the Church—especially, now, as the imminent return of Jesus Christ draws near!

The weekly Sabbath and the annual Holy Days of God outline and serve as a framework for the master plan of God. They are foundational parts of the gospel—the message of salvation and eternal life in the Kingdom of God. Keeping all of God’s Sabbaths is a sign between us and God—it reflects our relationship with Him.

We are about to enter the first of God’s annual Feast observances and we have this reminder for the Passover:

“For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes” (1 Corinthians 11:26).

Brethren, we must not take this responsibility lightly! Keeping this and all of God’s Holy Convocations is a way we can please God. Now is not the time to let down or turn away from the Truth we have received—and we have this warning from Jesus Christ:

“But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man” (Luke 21:34-36).

In Christ’s Service,



Dave Harris