



July 16, 2021

Scriptural Basis for Celebrating the Feasts, continued...

Warm hellos friends, brethren, co-workers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God, from our offices here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you all doing well, and that again your week has been blessed. Our pastoral visit to multiple states to the Southeast and Midwest went well, and we're back in Alabama catching up on several fronts after 3 weeks away.

Let's continue examining the Scriptural basis in the Greek Scriptures for celebrating the Feasts of the Lord - God's Holy days. Let's examine the practice and teaching of the apostle Paul as recorded in the book of Acts. *"When they asked him to stay a longer time with them, he did not consent, but took leave of them, saying, "I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem; but I will return again to you, God willing." And he sailed from Ephesus."* (Acts 18:20-21).

Paul adjusted his schedule and cut short his visit to observe the feast (likely the Feast of Tabernacles) in Jerusalem. *"For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost."* (Acts 20:16) Why else would he hurry to be at Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost unless he planned to observe it?

Paul told the Corinthians: *"For I do not wish to see you now on the way; but I hope to stay a while with you, if the Lord permits. But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost."* (1 Corinthians 16:7-8) Why mention Pentecost unless he was observing it?

One more reference to yet another annual holy day. *"Now when much time had been spent, and sailing was now dangerous because the Fast was already over, Paul advised them."* (Acts 27:9) The translators realized that this was a reference to the annual fast Day of Atonement! Luke takes note of it because the church was observing it *and* the other biblical Holy Days.

The apostle Paul was called to be the apostle to the Gentiles. (Acts 9:15; Romans 11:13) Most of the members of the congregations he raised up were non-Jews. Yet in his instructions to the members at Corinth, He clearly instructs them to observe the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread. *"Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the*

unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (1 Corinthians 5:7-8) Paul obviously gives instructions concerning the observance of the New Covenant Passover ceremony in 1 Corinthians 11:23-28 and he references the words of Christ in v.25.

If the celebration of the Sabbath and annual holy days was no longer required of those under the New Covenant, why is Paul instructing Gentiles concerning the feasts of the Lord? I think the answer is obvious.

Let's examine the instructions given by the apostle Paul to a congregation composed mostly of non-Jews, the church at Colosse. Paul refers to the members with the description "*the uncircumcision of your flesh*" (Colossians 2:13) and refers to them being spiritually circumcised (v.11) He goes on to warn them "*Therefore let no one judge you in food or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbaths. For these are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ.*" (Colossians 2:16-17 MKJV)

The context is explained and clarified later in verses 20-23. Paul mentions the principles, rules, or elements of the world. If we would try to apply this to keeping the Sabbath and holy days it simply does not make sense. Paul addresses the philosophies of the Gnostic teachers who were obsessed with angels and spirits, and some were even strict ascetics. They were critical of the way the members were celebrating the holy days and Sabbaths. The ascetics were critical of the members enjoying food and beverages and having joy and enjoyment on these days.

Paul is clearly acknowledging that the members at Colosse were observing these days. He is not condemning the members for doing such. Paul is condemning those who were coming in and trying to impose their Gnostic aseptic ideas. Paul said that these days *are* (present tense) a shadow of things to come (not just in the past). The autumn festivals especially foreshadow important events yet to come in the plan of God. The larger context of Colossians 2:16 is asceticism growing out of early Gnosticism, not a discussion of which laws are binding for Christians.

The record in the book of Acts of Paul's practices and the disciples he reached in Asia Minor and Greece is meeting with and instructing on the weekly Sabbath. Why would he contradict that in instructions to the members at Colosse?

I hope you'll take the time to examine and study these scriptures we discuss here, as it will help us sharpen both our spiritual tools, and in our personal laboring in the Word of God.

As I've mentioned, the Festival of Trumpets will be upon us in a few weeks. God's plan is an awesome one! I look forward to God's upcoming Feast Days, and I know you do too!

Arms up friends! Our prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Please do pray for us as well.

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