



September 10, 2021

His Feasts and Annual Sabbaths

Warm hellos friends, brethren, co-workers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God, from 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.

This past Tuesday, we observed and worshipped God on His Festival of Trumpets. With the commencing of the fall Feasts the enthusiasm is felt by all. A question came up in discussion that I'd like to consider and examine.

Why is it that some who believe in worshipping God on His weekly Sabbath reject worshipping God on His Feasts and annual Sabbaths?

Such arguments that the feasts and holy days were for the Jews, or for those under the Old Covenant administration and not for New Covenant believers, is presented as a reason. Does it make sense to separate the weekly Sabbath from the annual Sabbaths?

Scripture does not make a distinction in the observance of these special days. We have often noticed the statement in Leviticus 23, "*Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts.'*" (Lev 23:2) The list includes the weekly Sabbath and they are termed "the feasts of the LORD" and NOT the feasts of the Jews. In fact the first Feast Day mentioned is the weekly Sabbath.

When Ezra returned from Babylon to reestablish the temple of and the worship of God at Jerusalem, the altar of burnt offerings was first set up. The people gathered together during the seventh month of the year and then observed the Feast of Tabernacles and the regular burnt offering were offered.

Notice the statement made in the account in Ezra 3. "*Afterwards they offered the regular burnt offering, and those for New Moons and for all the appointed feasts of the LORD that were consecrated, and those of everyone who willingly offered a freewill offering to the LORD.*" (Ezra 3:5) The "appointed feasts of the LORD" would have to include the weekly Sabbath *and the annual Sabbaths* which are found under that designation in Leviticus 23.

The LORD explains several times in the book of Ezekiel the reasons that the house of Israel was sent into captivity. Let's take a brief look at one of them. "*because they despised My judgments*

and did not walk in My statutes, but profaned My Sabbaths; for their heart went after their idols." (Ezek. 20:16) In V.13 the phrase "*they greatly defiled My Sabbaths*" is used. I realize that this term may not be amplified exactly to specify both the weekly and annual Sabbaths, but there certainly seems to be a valid implication with using the plural word "Sabbaths."

In several chapters the celebration of "the Sabbaths and the New Moons and the set feasts" are grouped together (1Ch 23:31; 2Ch 2:4; 2Ch 8:13; 2Ch 31:3; Ne 10:33; Ezek. 45:17). The New Moons are not listed in Leviticus 23 as "holy convocations." Sacrifices were offered on the New Moons. We take note of them in the church as being important in determining the dates for celebrating the feasts and annual Sabbaths of the Lord.

Let's examine next a Scripture that is used to reject the observance of the Sabbath and Holy Days, but in reality is a very real proof that they were being observed even by the Gentiles in the church.

"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body of Christ." (AV Col 2:16-17)

I have left out the italicized words which imply an inaccurate understanding. The word "Sabbath" is in the singular in the Greek. Ascetics were criticizing the members for enjoying food and drink when celebrating the days mentioned. Paul says that the members are to look to the duly constituted teachers in the church to make a judgment about how to celebrate the days. The obvious inference is that the days, including the Sabbath and the Holy days, were being observed by the members of the church at Colosse. Paul says that they still "are" a shadow of things "to come" which implies a continued celebration and anticipating a future fulfillment.

As many know, Paul made a clear (but often ignored) statement regarding the Feast of Unleavened Bread, "*Therefore let us keep the feast*" (1 Cor 5:8) The record of the practices of the apostles and early church is that they celebrated the Sabbath, feasts, and Holy Days.

We'll soon continue another celebration of one of these important days – the Day of Atonement, one of the feasts of the LORD - that He has given to us to be both a blessing and a reminder of His wonderful plan of salvation and the role that Jesus the Christ plays in it.

My wife and I look forward with anticipation in being with many of you as we celebrate this upcoming Sabbath, Atonement, and Feast of Tabernacles and 8th day.

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

-Scott Hoefker

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