

The Festivals

We arrived Monday evening. One of their sons is in Ambassador College.

I stayed in the home of Mr. and Mrs. George F. Thiebelos when I had the opportunity of being in Salisbury now nearly two years and one and a half years ago, or one in a quaffer.

I will try to arrange on the day of atonement after the regular services are over for those who normally attend Imperial A.M. Congregation to have a chance to meet and to discuss the serious matters as seen from an insider.

The F. Thiebelos family is Greek and in this sense not in the tradition perhaps of the British colonial mainstream but I think it will be a privilege to have them be able to comment, to explain, to answer questions.

I haven't yet decided. It will be announced at some later time in our congregation but I would certainly say that any students who know Olympus of Thiebelos are certainly welcome if we can arrange a proper place and time.

I would draw attention. If there were a crisis in Rhodesia, the problem wouldn't be the white man's problem nor would it be the problem of the white brethren for obvious reasons.

It should be clear that if the whites decide to throw in the towel, you merely get in your car and you drive south.

The question is what will the blacks do who are not behind the revolution? What will the black brethren do? There is where the problem lies.

And officials of course in South Africa think that way and I think that our country tends to think differently and the problem would be a white man's problem. This is not the case at all.

So I hope that we can have an insight into the state of affairs there.

And now this evening there are a number of things that we might like to discuss with respect to the holy days, with respect to the upcoming autumn festival.

I thought that perhaps later in the evening we might have an opportunity to focus in some questions you might have not here to fore-answered.

There are a number of ways in which one can analyze the question that has been presented to us this evening.

I would start out by saying that we seldom realize that human beings are not as rational as we think ourselves to be.

And therefore what convinces one person is not necessarily what convinces another.

That proof may be quite logical and clear on the one hand but because something has been taken for granted, accepted that it seems untrue.

Therefore we recognize that on any number of topics and certainly on this one, there is always the tendency to be persuaded by one argument for one person, another argument or presentation for another individual.

And what seems especially convincing and helpful in the one case might seem not to be important in another.

Perhaps it is better to understand that fact before we go any further for the simple reason, that what may seem important to the one who speaks or to myself might not necessarily be critical for you.

And the same thing could be true if you were to explain it what might seem significant to you, I might find, you know, I could take it or leave it, it doesn't convince me one way or another.

So we need to be aware of this trait of human nature, whether we are defining why we are here or whether we are defining why God chose to hell particular periods of time.

There are a number of ways we can look at this problem.

Probably each one who has spoken, whether in classrooms or in assemblies or in the Bible studies on this subject, will have dealt with it in terms of his awareness of the general questions and his experience in the church.

I should like to give you an approach that might make you see it in a different light than you have before.

I will give you my experience and why I came to the decision that I did with respect to the festivals that God has given his church.

The time element is not critical, it might have been your experience, probably it would be impossible to repeat it today by the very nature that the broadcast has been known far and wide and the overwhelming majority of you have had some contact, if you were younger, with the church before you were held responsible for making a decision.

I first heard the broadcast in 1944, that's before some several of you were born.

I already, prior to ever hearing Mr. Herbert Armstrong had come to study and to draw a conclusion on such questions as the Sabbath, who were the lost ten tribes, the millennium, the tithing, what is God, what is man, what is hell in heaven.

These questions I came to a conclusion on before I ever heard the World Tomorrow broadcast.

I think that this is also indicative of why so many who were never faced with these questions or never thought on them before suddenly wonder why when some strange question comes from one direction or another if they had not looked into it and they begin to question what they believe.

Or as one minister told me, many people who are in God's church suddenly come up with questions after being baptized that some of us had to answer before we ever came to know of the church of God.

So, as you note, I left out one subject.

The one thing I had not understood, pertained to the annual festivals as revealed to the children of Israel, first of all at the time that the church was being formed, Exodus 12, and many related chapters throughout Old and New Testament.

I received a brochure from Mr. Armstrong pertaining to the Passover.

Of course, I was not converted at the time, and it was one of those what we would call biblical subjects.

It wasn't the subject that I had dealt with before, and it was something that I did not immediately understand.

The other topics that I have discussed were commonly presented by Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons or Seventh-day Adventists or the Britishers or World Federation.

They were discussed by any number of groups, and literature and theologians also have discussed them at length.

They tend to be questions of a general nature, but when it came to the question of the festival, and I first read it, I found I was not able to understand it, and I think that we should realize perhaps there is a reason why on the surface what distinguishes this work more definitely from any other group is not the Sabbath which others share, not an understanding of the Millennium, which certainly in significant ways some others share, not an understanding of the identity of the lost tribes, or that man is not an immortal soul dwelling in a material body or the question of tithing.

Some may disagree and some agree.

But in the Christian world, what is very significant is our relationship to a series of annual occasions that God hallowed.

They are in a sense related to the Church, and at this time I didn't know that there was a Church of God.

When I did come in 1947 when the college first opened, I also had another surprise.

Not only was there the Church of God or the broadcast corporate name, the Radio Church of God, I also learned that there were other churches called the Churches of God, and in parentheses there followed the expression Seventh Day with headquarters in Standbury, Missouri.

And it was these Churches of God, I will use the term in the plural, because they tended to be rather independent in terms of local polity, but they represented a period of a time earlier than Mr. Armstrong's ministry, and I learned that they didn't observe the festivals.

And the Radio Church of God, which was the corporate name or the Church of God, as we generally use that term, did.

So I had a chance to evaluate the subject, and I began to realize what most of us should know, and that is that the festivals were given to the Church.

They were not presented from any evidence we have in Scripture to an individual, such as Abel or Enoch or Noah, or for that matter, Abraham or Isaac or Jacob, individuals whom God dealt with and personally appeared to.

The festivals begin in Exodus 12, and it was at the same time in the 12th chapter that we have the introduction of the Congregation of Israel or the Church for the first time in history, a body of people to be organized for a specific purpose.

I did not immediately accept the matter of the festival.

I am not of Jewish background.

There were no Jews in the Church in that day of which we were conscious in terms of Jewish religion and culture.

I did not have a background typical of those who are the lost tribes of Israel.

I had Jewish friends, though I was a German, my Jewish friends respected me, and I respected them in high school during the Second World War period.

But I had to face the question when the festivals were presented, and I doubt that most of us ever look at it quite this way.

I had to face the question, was I to become a Jew inwardly? That was and is the issue when the Holy Days are presented.

Because there are those who can see other doctrines on the Millennium or on the Sabbath or the lost tribes, you name it, tithing, some of these things are shared by other Christian groups.

But what is uniquely Jewish is a series of festivals, seven and number, and I realize what I doubt the majority even in God's Church do, that there is nothing more significant in the world as it is now structured than the fact that if we keep the festivals of God, we are most directly related to a Jewish practice.

Thank you, this is an announcement.

I should make two of them and interrupt at the moment.

Before I tell you which car has lights on, Mr. Steve Martin called and asked you to announce that there will be no Bible study on the 23rd of September.

That is the Sabbath prior to the Tabernacles.

Necessarily the 30th, we won't have our regular study, except that it pertain to the festival, and there will be a Bible study pertaining to the festival that will be announced during the festival.

There will be none on the 7th of October, so the next Bible study will be the 14th on the 7th, which is the last regular vacation period.

I appreciate that this announcement has been made, and I assume for those who are not here this evening that there will be such an announcement made during services.

Now, a blue Toyota station wagon the lights are on, California license 073HGR.

To the question, when I made up my mind on the question of the festival, after months here at college, and I didn't make it up in September or October or November or December or January, it took some time because to do this was to depart from what had been regarded as the broad Christian view, and it meant doing something that was so significantly Jewish that there was no question that this is an issue because who are God's people even more specifically than does the Sabbath itself, meaning the 7th day of the week? I had a chance in Oregon during the time we sometimes worked there in the summer of 1949 and 1950 to visit two of the churches of God's 7th day in Eugene, Oregon and in Jefferson, Oregon, and to meet those people, and I realized something very significant.

Having ceased to observe the festivals, and I'll explain that in a moment, there were things in the plan of God that are revealed in the annual festivals that were unknown to the church of God's 7th day.

There was a lack of cohesion.

The churches were scattered, and they did not have the kind of unity that built this work to the level at which it now is.

That in a period of 40 years, we had come to accomplish things that the church of God's 7th day had not done in a century, and the festivals provided the link, both in terms of our spiritual and social fellowship on the one hand and the meaning of the festivals on the other.

The more I evaluated what I saw in the church of God's 7th day, the more I was convinced that what they lacked was critically important.

Now, it did not occur to us at the time, but later we discovered that branches of the church of God's 7th day, for instance, in Mexico, were still observing the festivals as late as the middle 1950s, and anyone who says the church of God's 7th day was not observing the festivals should take note of the variation in the customs in the church.

Or to assume that the church of God did something that had never been done before in church history when Mr. Armstrong began teaching that the festivals are to be observed, that this would be untrue.

There is a time in history where we can see that there is a cessation of the festivals also of the Sabbath among those who separated themselves from the churches of God over the centuries.

The last basic record of the annual festivals that we have, as mentioned in the Councils of the Catholic Church of God, which is the official name of the Roman Catholic Church, take us into the 5th century or the 400th.

The last reference to the Sabbath day in the Greek Orthodox Church takes us to approximately the 11th century in terms of the traditional manner in which the Sabbath was observed.

From time to time, wherever we may trace a reference to the churches of God through history, no matter what the name, that is the people doing the work, we have some indication of the Sabbath being known, some indication of the festivals being observed, and sometimes we have a far greater zeal than at other times expressed in the church, almost invariably linked to a full and understanding grasp of the Sabbath and the festival.

What I would like to do is point up to one thing that we are normally not as aware of.

It's one thing to say that the annual festivals are Jewish.

It's another thing to say that the Jews have really kept them.

To this day, the Jews are very divided on the subject.

It might be of interest to you to note that every one of the major periods of time when the churches scattered in Judah, and sometimes Israel, but normally those in Israel who did seek God had to come to Judah, the congregations of the synagogues translated later by the Greek the word church that's come down into English, Ecclesiast, you have an indication that the Jews as a whole had gotten away from observing the festivals and every major reform, if we use the term, every major period of repentance, every major return to God centered initially.

At a period of time that was one of the annual holy days, it was never recorded alone that the children of Israel came back to God and really sought Him when we look at the history of the divided monarchy, which is the history of Israel separate and Judah separate, without recognizing the festivals are involved.

We are not told when the children of Israel first ceased to observe the festival.

There is no major passing record in the book of Judges.

We do, however, find an indication that the knowledge of the festivals was certainly extant in the days of Samuel and David and Solomon.

That is, there is no significant emphasis up to this time, except that the temple is dedicated to the Feast of Tabernacle.

But as with many things, it takes some centuries for a people or a nation to forget the primary things God has revealed.

Now, when there was a revolt in Israel, you remember that the fundamental thing that Jeroboam, who was the first king of the ten tribes of Israel did, was to officially alter one of the festivals that are here to hitherto been observed.

He changed the festival of Tabernacles from the seventh month to the eighth month, 1 Kings 12:32.

You are all familiar with that, but I want you to recognize that the first fundamental act for collective worship that grew away the people after a place had been appointed in the northern end of Israel and in the southern end of Israel was to alter the festivals so that the children of Israel, ten tribes, would not have to go or be attracted to Jerusalem.

That was the start, and Israel never returned or recovered from this era.

Now, as we move through history, we have a number of records that you can be aware or you certainly would be aware of.

If we were to take note of this story, for instance, in the Chronicles, the book of Chronicles, chapter 1 and 2, tend to parallel Kings, though some of the more religious matters are recorded specifically in Chronicles.

There were very important events in the range of two specific Kings.

One Hezekiah, one Josiah.

We are all aware of what is commonly called the reform of Hezekiah.

This reform of Hezekiah is linked, of course, to the story of the Passover found in 2 Chronicles, chapter 30.

In 2 Chronicles, chapter 30 is the story of the Passover, and a remarkable festival this was, which you should read sometime.

I won't take the time here because it's a rather long and lengthy chapter.

They observed the Passover and they observed the days of unleavened bread.

That is also recorded in chapter 30, verse 21.

Now, there was such great joy in Jerusalem, the like of which had not been since the time of Solomon, who was the son of David.

This is recorded in verse 26.

So we certainly get the feeling of bedrift away, and when the nations sought to turn back to God in the days of Hezekiah under his leadership, of course, you have a major focus on the festival of the Passover and the days of unleavened bread.

Similarly, of course, in Josiah's reign, after the nation had departed in the days of both Ammon and Manasseh, the kings of Judah.

And here we have the record.

In 2 Chronicles, chapter 35, that Josiah kept the Passover to God and this was a very remarkable Passover also.

This was done in his 18th year as he was maturing and it was a very remarkable festival indeed and we have a parallel account of that in the Book of Kings.

And we'll turn back to the Book of Kings in this case.

In chapter 23, after the reform in 2 Kings, chapter 23, after the reform in Judah, the king commanded all to keep the Passover.

This is recorded in verses 21, 22, and 23.

Later on, when the children of Israel returned to the land of Palestine following their captivity, we have a reference to the needs of gathering the community together and in chapter 3 of the Book of Ezra is a reference to the Feast of Tabernacles.

This is in chapter 3 and verse 4.

A parallel verse may be found in Nehemiah, chapter 8, verse 12, and related areas in this same 8th chapter.

In verse 12 of chapter 8 of Nehemiah, I should say verse 2, excuse me, Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation, verse 2 of chapter 8, and this was on the first day of the seventh month, which is the Feast of Trumpets, which we have just observed this past Tuesday.

Then they discovered what was required in the law, and we discovered that the children of Israel then observed the Feast of Tabernacles as it is written beginning in verse 14.

And so they observed it in the manner that was appropriate for that climate.

And this had not been done even since the days of Joshua, as we are told in the last part of chapter 8, verse 17.

For since the days of Joshua the son of Nun, the children of Israel had not observed the festival in this manner.

They had observed the festival, but they had been rather negligent or careless in the responsibility.

And we have here the interesting indication that when the nation returns to God, we are dealing with this aspect which also returns to observe the festival.

And I noted that in the Church of God seventh day that they had departed many of them from the knowledge of the calendar, they had departed from the knowledge of the festival, and the degree to which they had departed was the degree to which they had not understood the plan of God.

Now this might not ever be an experience you go through, because you may never have lived at the time when the Church of God or the Worldwide Church of God and the Church of God seventh day was very close in contact.

In those days, it was not uncommon for the majority of members in the state of Oregon to have relatives in either of the congregation.

And if you want to know how the separation occurred, you should read the autobiography in the year fundamentally of 1938 when there was a severance, there was a decision reached by the Church of God seventh day.

It was not that Mr. Armstrong left.

They terminated the relationship with the brethren in Eugene and with the brethren in Portland and Vancouver.

And this work began to grow a pace following.

Those of us who had been involved with the festivals during the later 1940s after the college was founded certainly saw without any question that the character of this work, the nature of what held the Church together and what linked the brethren across the United States and later Canada, was the contact in the festivals and that of course is the reason that God had given.

Now in looking at this picture, I would draw attention that there are different points of view that we might have in approaching the problem.

Thus there are some of us in the Church today who would say if I could find the festivals recorded as having begun prior to the Old Covenant at Sinai, then that would convince me.

There are others who would say whether it is recorded before the Old Covenant, as in Exodus 12, before the Old Covenant, or during the Old Covenant, they would want to have it repeated in the new.

And unless it's repeated in the new, I wouldn't be convinced.

Some would say, well if I found in the history of God's people through time that this was a characteristic of the Church, whenever the Church had drawn close to God and God was using it to do the work, that would be a very strong indication of how God leads the Church.

I would draw attention to a fundamental factor that we are all aware of, or should be.

There was a council in Acts chapter 15 at the record of it.

You're all familiar with the question arose of circumcision and the Law of Moses.

The Law of Moses was a specific term referring to those functions of the Church and the nation that pertained to the temple, and that pertained to many of the customs that separated the Jew from the Gentile in terms of washings.

It involved, for that matter, even the legal right of the Church to enforce further restrictions if necessary.

What is significant, and I would draw this to your attention, the question of circumcision was not dealt with by Jesus directly during his ministry, nor was the question, for that matter, of the Sabbath or the Holy Day.

The Sabbath, I will discuss this briefly in a moment.

I would draw attention to the fact that Jesus himself in speaking to the Jew did not make an issue about circumcision.

When the question came up of circumcision with respect to the Gentiles who were essentially unrelated to the Jewish community, what is significant is that it took a church council, a council of the Church of God to come to a conclusion pertaining to circumcision.

Now, circumcision appeared before Moses.

It was of the fathers, and it came to the children of Israel, even as a token of the covenant in the days of Abraham.

It took a church council to evaluate the question of circumcision, and the decision was not what even most of us may have taken for granted prior to evaluating it carefully.

The council of the Church of God, as recorded in Acts 15, came to the conclusion that the question of circumcision for the Gentiles is that it is not a requirement for salvation.

No decision was made at the council to alter the practice of circumcision in the Jewish community.

The latter is what is normally overlooked.

Interestingly, if it took a church council to evaluate something of the level of circumcision, which was not the original covenant God made with Abraham but a token of it, how much more should it have taken a church council to address the question of the Sabbath or the holy days, which were recorded in the law as fundamental to the character and fabric of the church and the nation that we call Israel? Yet there is not a single council called anywhere in the New Testament that brought into question for the Gentiles what they should do with respect to the Sabbath or the holy days.

There was the question of circumcision and the laws that Moses gave with respect to the relationship to the temple, to the priesthood, and there were certain things that unless Gentiles did, they had no right in the temple, in Jerusalem, and in dealing with the priesthood.

Circumcision is specified.

No reference in Acts chapter 15 is made to either Sabbath or holy days.

I think that is more significant than most people have ever given credit.

It would have taken no less than a church council to have made any change in the law pertaining either to the festivals of God or, that's the annual, or the weekly because it most certainly took a council even to deal with the question of physical circumcision which, after all, only pertained to male babies anyway.

Further, even in the law of Moses, there were four requirements that were asked to be kept while Moses did involve the question of sacrifice and, necessarily, the manner of sacrifice that the Gentiles had been familiar with like strangling an animal or eating blood with the animal or associating the sacrifice with an idol or a statue that either represented or was viewed as God or involving sacrifice to idols with sexual promiscuity.

These were all characteristic of the Gentile world and so the church even imposed those four points.

Now, in imposing those four points we better think twice before we assume that the Sabbath, one of the ten commandments has been set aside when the other matters of the law like not eating blood with an animal sacrifice was imposed.

And that is, after all, a physical thing.

I'm going through this because it is very important at this stage that we take a note before this festival season coming up which we're already in, in fact, again of the significance of the decisions rendered in the Book of Acts.

Jesus, as I have mentioned before and some of these will be repetitive statements but it's very important.

Jesus loosened the law pertaining to the Sabbath by his example and by the words when he explained to the disciples what they could do.

Let me explain the meaning of that in terms of the ten commandments.

When the ten commandments at Sinai were presented to a nation of unconverted people they were given in simple form both susceptible to general understanding and susceptible to general administration.

Some of the law, let's say, now shall not commit adultery.

It didn't deal with the question of your attitude or intent but only act.

The commandment would say you shall not kill.

It didn't deal with the question of hatred and animosity but merely the deed that we call murder.

The Sabbath, on the other hand, was not like those two, those two laws that I have mentioned, those two points of the law, had many loopholes that needed to be closed later.

The Sabbath left no loopholes and was absolute because it said that neither you, nor your immediate relatives and your gate, nor those who work for you are allowed to do any work.

There is no exception.

So whereas, in the question of the Sabbath, Jesus loosened the any to allow for proper exceptions such as when an ox falls in the ditch, when mercy should be extended, when a man has been healed and he could take up his pad.

In the same way Jesus, of course, closed the loopholes when he stated the principles of the New Covenant and evaluated the attitude of hate plus with respect to thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not commit adultery.

Jesus, in other words, is restating the commandments in a fashion that clarifies their meaning, intent and purpose.

Jesus nowhere set aside Saturday as a rest day and made it a work day, nor does any act or counsel in the New Testament after the death and ascension of Jesus indicate that that was done.

When we look at the New Testament, we marvel how often the festivals are generally recorded.

That is, we discover that whereas in our Christian world today, which is thought to be Christian, we have such interesting references as to New Year's on January 1, to that very strange Roman custom

passing out Valentine's, not once mentioned in the New Testament in February, I think the 14th, as our normal calendar has it.

Then we have what we call, and this will vary with the church congregation, we have a period of Lent for some, we certainly have a good Friday, we have an Easter Sunday, and then we come along with All Souls Day and All Saints Day, that we commonly associate, of course, with a hallowed evening called Halloween, when we use strange witches' brew, pumpkins cut up, broomsticks, masks, and then we have what is called Christmas, and we have other festivals depending on the church's custom.

None of these are stated in the New Testament.

They are all substitutes because even the Christian world is aware of the need of people to do things together as a group that binds them to a responsibility to which they are called.

Now, who calls them and what their work is is another question altogether.

We are called for a specific job revealed in the Scripture, and what brings to our attention what that work is and what that message is is, in fact, the festivals themselves.

If we neglect to keep and to study and to put to practice in our lives these festivals, we will find that our spiritual state is no longer the same.

It is significant, you see, that we have quite a number of individuals who have left the fellowship over the last three or more years.

These are individuals who, in general, have ceased to observe the festivals that the church had been observing, and it has led to a situation where some have abandoned practically everything they understood, others have abandoned part of it, but they have lost sight of a work.

There isn't a single one of those who have left our fellowship who has a participatory role in a work that Christ has called the church to perform.

That is, in Matthew chapter 28, and stated elsewhere, to bring the gospel to all the world for a witness and to teach all nations and to baptize them, to bring them to that place where they are imbued with the Spirit of God.

Now, it should be obvious that we should have expected that people would drift from the festivals and drift from the fellowship because this is, in fact, how Christianity arose in the first place.

Christianity, as we know it in history, has distinct from Christ's teaching, and there is a great deal of difference.

The same book may be referred to in general, but what is derived from this book is an entirely different matter.

I would draw your attention to the fact that the church, when God first dealt with it as a carnal family of Jacob, was asked to observe a particular festival for the church when Jesus Christ, imbued it with His Spirit, was keeping a festival of God prior to the receipt of the Holy Spirit.

Thus in Acts 2, they didn't receive the Holy Spirit and then start observing a festival called Pentecost.

There are many, many people who are called Pentecostal Christians who think that Pentecost commemorates the coming of the Spirit and was not observed before the Spirit came.

Now of course there are some who know different and understand it better, who are people who may study the Bible a little more often.

We know that the children of Israel in the days of Moses were already observing the Passover because if they had not been, they would not have been passed over when the death angel struck the firstborn of Egypt.

The significance there is that they were involved in a festival before their sins were passed over.

The church was asked to commemorate a holy day as in Acts 2, which would signify that if they were willing to obey and to observe this festival, which was the end of spring, in this case they were the recipients of the Holy Spirit, which is what I claim.

You do not observe the Passover, but exclude the days of Unleavened Bread and succeeding festivals.

You do not observe the day of atonement and exclude the Feast of Tabernacles which many in the Jewish communities around us do.

That is, the Jewish children will be out on the day of atonement, they will be in school during the Feast of Tabernacles if they are the normal reformed community.

The significance is, and I have stated this before, that if you want to know the plan of God, you must come to that church whom God reveals it.

And He reveals these things fundamentally on the annual festival, brings things to our attention we would not otherwise have thought of.

And insofar as the ministry remains faithful to it, and as the people remain faithful in attending, then the understanding of the festival becomes clearer and clearer and the role in the plan of God.

There are some who might accept what is called the Passover and neglect the rest in the Christian world.

Hence, many groups, Bible students, the International Bible Student Fellowship and others, the Jehovah's Witnesses would regard the Passover as what they are doing, and they stop there and do not observe the rest of the festivals that God gave, and hence their understanding of the resurrection with respect to the millennium is altogether erroneous.

Their understanding of the second resurrection after the millennium is erroneous.

This is one of the great tragedies that you start and you stop along the way and you don't have a full understanding of the plan.

So, for many, one of the important arguments will be that they are all linked together.

They are all asked to be observed together, and there are clear references to the varied festivals, as you are familiar with in 1 Corinthians 5.8, where there is certainly a reference to the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and in the RSV, a verse that is otherwise in the Greek manuscripts in general circulation in the Greek community in Acts chapter 18:21 that is in the King James Version, but is not in the RSV, because some of the early Greek manuscripts in Egypt do not have them.

Some prefer to go to Egypt for their learning.

I think it is much wiser to stay with the Greek community with respect to that, and there is a festival that Paul mentions.

And, of course, you are familiar with what we have said before in our literature.

Pentecost is a reference in 1 Corinthians 16.8 as a point of time.

Paul planned to stay in Ephesus until the day of Pentecost.

These are all familiar things, but what is significant is that you can look through the whole of the Bible, and you will not find Christian festivals anywhere substituted in the New Testament for the festivals that God gave.

Now, the broad majority of the Church of God perceives this, that you cannot avoid the fact that the festivals and the Sabbath are taken for granted in the behavior of the New Testament community, even with respect to the Gentiles, so much so that the Colossians where the Jewish community was basically unknown, a basic Gentile community was asked to stand for the practices that the New Testament Apostles had brought to their attention or that the Evangelists had brought to their attention, and they were asked to see that no man sat in judgment, even pertaining to a festival.

The Holy Days, the New Moons, the Sabbath, the New Moons being important in terms of the Jewish calendar at that time, which is now a fixed calendar.

The Colossians would hardly have had a problem such as this if they had never been observing the festivals, but they were being judged by their brethren, their Gentile brethren, that is the Greek peoples around them, their relatives, and Paul is addressing this very question, something they had not heard or understood before.

And he brings up the fact that these festivals, in this connection, are shadows of things to come.

And this is an important thing because the Church of God's Seventh Day falsely argued, and you can see their literature on this point, that because the festivals are Sabbaths, sorry, the festivals are shadows, that therefore they shouldn't be kept, that only when they become a reality, and that's why they thought they were observing the Passover because Christ had died.

What they forgot was the Holy Spirit came and they were not keeping Pentecost.

So the argument was fallacious.

Now, in reality, it is far more important, if you want a reason with human reason, to observe something while it's still foreshadows what has not yet taken place in order that you keep your mind on what is yet to come.

If the Jewish community had forgotten what was being foreshadowed by the festivals, it would have forgotten the plan.

And the degree to which they got mixed up is the degree to which they, of course, have lost in knowledge so that they are not really aware of what the millennium is going to be like.

They are not aware of what the period after the millennium shall be like with respect to the Second Resurrection.

I have a letter in my briefcase written by a Jewish person who says that we exclude the Jews from the salvation that is through Christ because you have to come through Christ and the Jews do not.

The answer, of course, is we don't exclude them.

They are yet to come through Christ and they're going to do it in the Second Resurrection if they've lived and died.

The fact should be clear then.

The festivals were given in the beginning in the Book of Exodus to foreshadow things to come.

And the ultimate reality is what Christ himself brings about, either directly himself when he offered himself as the Passover or less directly so, that is when he even uses us to fulfill his word.

Because we're going to be used to impart the Holy Spirit and we are being used to do that.

We are being used to bring people out of sin, hence the Feast of Eleven Bread, which pictures putting away sin.

We're going to be used in the world tomorrow to bring the whole world back to God in a sense fulfilling in part the Feast of Tabernacles.

There's also Christ himself most directly will be used to bring the world to God so that the whole world may be reached.

The festivals do foreshadow things to come.

So does the Sabbath.

The Church of God's Seventh Day unfortunately forgot that the Sabbath foreshadows something as well as commemorates.

And if you are not to observe that which foreshadows then they shouldn't be observing the Sabbath by their kind of reasoning which was very unfortunate.

The fact is the Sabbath is both a memorial and foreshadows something, a memorial of creation week and it foreshadows the thousand years following six thousand years generally speaking of human experience because the plan of God is patterned after the week.

God hasn't obligated himself to intervene suddenly at the end of six thousand years expressly.

There's no such statement in Scripture.

It's an analogy.

But the Sabbath peace in Hebrews 4 that we have well you know the Jewish expression Shabbat Shalom Sabbath peace to you that is to typify the peace in the world tomorrow when for a thousand years the world is to be at peace instead of war.

Now if the Sabbath has those points you can see also so do the annual holy days.

Let's note that even though Christ died to pay for the sins of the world and that his death made it possible for God the Father to pass over our sin if we accept Christ in our stead to pay the penalty that although that has been now fulfilled and in a sense we commemorate the action that was then done which has been the teaching of the church.

This does not deny the fact that in terms of the application of Christ's sacrifice it has yet to be accomplished with a broad spectrum of humanity.

The bulk of human beings, 99% of all human beings have never benefited by Christ's death yet because they are in their sins.

They have not been forgiven then and therefore there is coming a time even foreshadowed by the Passover when God will pass over them and that hasn't happened yet.

In the same way the world does lie in sin and so the days of Unleavened Bread still foreshadow the ultimate putting out of sin which won't be accomplished until 7,000 years have elapsed hence the 7 days of Unleavened Bread.

Now it does commemorate the fact that the church and God's people through history have put out sin not to mention of course the departure of Israel from Egypt, the type of sin but take Pentecost.

Pentecost does now commemorate the giving of the Holy Spirit.

It once foreshadowed the fact that the Holy Spirit would yet come.

If it foreshadowed the coming of the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts chapter 2 that was but a tiny fulfillment because the Holy Spirit has never entered more than a fraction of humanity.

The ultimate fulfillment of the day of Pentecost is yet to come because the Holy Spirit first came in the 31st year of the present era only for a very few and only has been imparted to a very few sins.

The ultimate fulfillment is what Joel speaks of and that is what was quoted only in terms of the beginning of the pouring out of God's Spirit.

Now of course we know that the Feast of Trumpets pictures a time of war a blowing of trumpets of warning an actual warfare that is the crisis of the clothes the Feast of Trumpets pictures the crisis of the clothes and the intervention of God to save humanity.

We have yet to see that occur.

What we need to know is that when a church forgets to observe the Feast of Trumpets when people individually forget they begin to forget what is foreshadowed by it.

Hence the Jews will have far more awareness of Jesus Christ as their Messiah when he comes read Zechariah chapter 12 that when the Messiah comes they're going to be repenting the men apart and the women apart which is a Jewish tradition.

The house of David, the house of Judah, the Levites the Christian world will think he's the Antichrist the Jews as a whole observe the Feast of Trumpets the Christian world does not.

The church of God's seventh day spiritually dead at the top unfortunately doesn't observe the Feast of Trumpets as a whole individuals among the might who have not yet contacted us one way or another around the world they are going to be caught unawares and will not discern the time because they haven't discerned the importance of the festival the day of atonement of course pictures the putting away of the devil that is what we're going to hear about next Thursday based on the book of Leviticus in chapter 16 in parallel verses and there we will discover very important information in terms of how the world tomorrow is going to be governed it won't be governed by spirits it's going to be governed by the family of God and the spirits who are now in control are going to be removed from that role this is what we understand this will explain why there will never be in the millennium a Soviet Union with leaders who think as they do why there will never be a revival of the fascist system in Europe there will never be a revival of any of the other great systems because they are ultimately inspired by spirits who think competitively think in terms of war and competition and strike to have a balance that's the devil's world we observe the day of atonement because it is a part of a whole series of festivals that were given the book of Acts when Paul was taking his journey to Rome has a reference to the fast which is understood clearly in the Jewish community and by

Christian scholars to refer to the day of atonement Paul didn't speak of Halloween being passed he spoke of the fast being passed what is unique everywhere is that the annual festivals are recorded as an experience through each year something that you measured time by I will see you at the festival I will stay till a festival and all the substitutes and counterfeits that have been imposed since are never once expressly alluded to in the New Testament except that prophetically of course the world would get away from the truth and substitute fables and the world did as Galatians 4-10 indicates substituting the things that the Gentiles once had that they should have laid aside forever but they reintroduced the use of statues to remind one of God despite the commandment which forbids it number two they reintroduced various customs the Christmas time or tide the period that is called Lent not seven days of unleavened bread but forty days and many had other days they settled on forty then all the others have been added since Galatians 4-10 is an indication of how along with some of the customs of the Jews thus the Samaritans parallel this kind of thinking had introduced the traditions of their past along with some Jewish customs and Galatians is the first indication of the trend in which we see an amalgamation of Judaism an amalgamation of the practices of the Gentiles and as time went on instead of merely introducing some of the Greek practices they began to introduce later the Germanic practices and the Latin practices and they got away more and more from the Jewish practices because fewer and fewer Jews were in contact with the churches that had separated themselves from any fellowship with the church of God and today of course the Christian world is essentially an amalgam of the varied traditions of the people who have been reached you go to Latin America and the Christian tradition is a mixture of Indian tradition and Catholicism from Europe you go to Northern Europe and Protestant and Catholic customs will link and wed Celtic and Germanic practices that are found nowhere in Mexico or Italy or France you go into Asia and India and you will find the same thing whether in the Catholic or Protestant world and it is a part of human nature to try to take the best of one's past customs and to call them by some Christian practice and to hang on to some of the things that you have received either from the Jewish or Christian tradition these are tragedies but they are laid out nevertheless as a part of the experience of the Christians in Central Asia Minor where the Galatians were settled we can expect today that just as Christians in Galatia and elsewhere began to have different points of view that we will find the same thing today there are probably no small number of people who will be observing the festival only because it is the thing to do and if strife enters into the church on the matter or individuals get concerned about it or there is external pressure and persecution is coming you can expect that people will abandon it and reason the same as they will with respect to the Sabbath but if we observe it I might lose my job and I have to feed my family and of course that is an evidence of the lack of faith faith is a matter of your confidence to trust God to see you through these problems now in the book of Isaiah even in the very first chapter we have clear references to the fact that the Jewish people and certainly the house of Israel because Isaiah really is addressed to both when you look the whole picture through they have either laid aside God's festival the house of Israel or in some cases altered how they should be practiced and with respect to Pentecost the Jewish community does observe Pentecost on a different day than it was originally given to the children of Israel now God shows both there and in Hosea and there are many different places you might like to look in a concordance under the word festival or mostly feast or feasts and you will these are King James it will help you find all the statements in the Old Testament there is an interesting indication that there is coming a time as in laments when God will even take away from us the peace we have in observing his Sabbath and his festival and I'm using the word us here a little more broadly than just the church because it's going to affect the whole of the western world it is a tragedy and you can look in the book of Lamentations and elsewhere that when God takes away the opportunity to observe his festivals peaceably there will be people who will drift away they will neglect this is just to be expected and I think we might as well be forewarned because there are people who under pressure around them

will no longer continue to observe the Sabbath this is going to affect the festivals just as well because people will use the reasoning about maintaining a job and so the issue in Revelation pertains to the John that if you observe certain of the worldly practices then you can buy and sell and trade and if you don't cooperate you won't be able to buy and sell and trade you won't have a job and you will really have to trust God that's what it's all about now we don't know yet whether it will involve a reform in the calendar such as the adoption by the United Nations for the whole world of what is called the world calendar that will break the weekly cycle this has not yet been something that has been approved though most Latin American countries have a favor of it should that occur it would be the most ready vehicle for the disruption of the weekly Sabbath and I think that we will find the great many would compromise on that point just because we tend to want to reason and we tend to want to justify not having to trust God when a crisis comes in nature we need to look in the mirror see what ancient Judah and Israel did now in this connection also I think that we're going to have to face reality that when the children of Israel come out of captivity they are going to begin to observe what they have neglected all these centuries and even some people who have been in the church in our fellowship at least and who have compromised are going to have to face what they haven't really been aware of as they should when God brings the nations together again as in Zachariah chapter 12, 13 and 14 and in particular chapter 14 he asks in no uncertain terms that even the Gentiles should observe the Feast of Tabernacles not alone the Israelites and above all he focuses in on the Islamic country of Egypt and he even points up that there is going to be force exerted until those people learn and it is going to bring them to the knowledge of God now if this is going to be required of the Gentiles in the future we have the very broad and important principle God asks you today as a human being to put into practice his law now so that you will learn the meaning and show that you are in fact willing to live in accordance with that law and submit to it and when you have allowed yourself to be governed by the law of God which does command our presence in this festival season then God asks you and not until then to rule in his kingdom and in this case not merely voluntarily because that is the way the world has now been for nearly 6000 years but then it will be by force there won't be any alternative the Egyptians are going to be hemmed in by plague and grout until they have no other choice but to come up and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles as chapter 14 verse 19 says now I know there are those who reason that the Gentiles never have to do this during the so called church period or dispensation to use a term that we don't use it is very plain all through the history of the New Testament that we are asked whether Jew or Gentile whether the house of Israel whether Scythian or Barbarian to be a Jew inwardly and what makes one a Jew inwardly above all when we get down to it is that we have the festivals of God as an intimate part of our spiritual fellowship with him and our spiritual and social fellowship with the brethren it links us together as a body we discover that what is going to link the Gentile world with the house of Israel and the house of Judah when Jesus Christ returns and chapter 14 speaks of the time when he sets his foot on the Mount of Olives he is going to intervene at that very time and reveal the knowledge of his festivals to the Gentiles and they are going to learn and for the first time they are going to understand what lies ahead a thousand years of peace and prosperity and opportunity to be begotten and ultimately to be born into the kingdom of God and this is something for the Gentile as well as for the Israelite and if the Gentile is going to be asked to do this when Jesus Christ comes back and when he rules and remember the millennium is not Jesus forcing the Jews to become like Gentiles the millennium is that time when Jesus requires the Gentiles to become Jews inwardly and he requires the Jews to become Jews inwardly the world has got it turned upside down the assumption is that Christ is ruling the Gentile world today through the church and that this is the day when we are all to live like Gentiles and then Christ comes back for those who think he does there will be others who don't even believe that that then Christ is going to force the Jews to become like the Christian Gentiles to abandon the Sabbath to abandon the festival and to begin to do the very thing that the Gentiles had

been doing all along who were called Christians in this world where they had amalgamated some biblical things with many of their heathen tradition the Bible shows it's just the opposite that when Christ comes back and we rule with him we live and reign with Christ a thousand years Revelation chapter 20 we're going to see him because we will be like him we're going to sit on speaking collectively on thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel we're going to rule the Gentiles with a rod of iron and break those nations that might rebel as you smash a potter's vessel we're going to rule over cities like the mayors until everybody begins to do the opposite of what people think the millennium is going to be like it's going to be a situation in which the Gentile who has no knowledge of God's holy days begins to observe them and they're not to let any man judge them for doing that and that's the message of Colossians 2.16 until they all learn to do it just as the Gentiles who were converted began to learn these things when they entered the Christian church in the New Testament time now when we see this picture it begins