

FEASTS OF RECONCILIATION

by
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How great was your Feast of Tabernacles last year? What great spiritual lessons did you take from the feast that enabled you to grow toward *spiritual maturity* (Hebrews 6:1)? Or, did you skip the feast altogether, as many have done in recent years? Or, maybe you are totally unaware that God has weekly and annual holy days THAT TEACH US HIS PLAN FOR **RECONCILING** HUMAN BEINGS TO HIMSELF IN HIS VERY FAMILY!

Most humans, including those who claim to be “Christians,” do not know the real reason why God created human beings. Genesis 1:26-27 reveals that God created humans IN HIS OWN IMAGE. He made humans physical but with the **POTENTIAL** of becoming spirit beings. As Paul explained in 1 Corinthians 15:45: “The first Adam became (was created) a living (physical) being, and the last Adam (Jesus Christ) A LIFE GIVING SPIRIT.” Then, as verse 49 explains, “And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, SO SHALL WE BEAR THE LIKENESS OF THE MAN FROM HEAVEN (Jesus Christ).” Then verse 51 shows that “WE WILL ALL BE CHANGED.” We are predestined to be CHANGED from physical flesh and blood to A **SPIRIT BEING** - - changed to and given immortality (verses 51-54. This change (for those who truly follow Christ) occurs AT THE LAST TRUMP WHEN CHRIST RETURNS TO THIS EARTH (vs. 52 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). This change from mortal to immortality occurs ONLY to those who have yielded to God and become A NEW CREATION in Christ because we have been RECONCILED TO GOD (2 Corinthians 5:17-20).

As Paul further explained in Romans 8:29-30, humans are PREDESTINED to be TRANSFORMED INTO THE LIKENESS OF JESUS CHRIST IN HIS GLORIFIED STATE. That is because, ONCE WE RESPOND TO GOD AND TURN OUR LIVES OVER TO HIM, we become SONS OF GOD, HEIRS OF GOD AND JOINT HEIRS WITH CHRIST (Romans 8:14-17). The holy days God established clearly reveal His plans for human beings. It is recognized and acknowledged that many will not believe or accept the plan God has revealed in the Bible even though the subject is clearly set forth. The purpose for this article is NOT to try and convince anyone of these truths. This ministry is for a WITNESS ONLY and not to try and convince anyone of anything! Our job is to set forth the truths of God as plainly as we can and then allow each person to decide what he or she will do with this knowledge. We all answer to God! But, from this day onward, you have now been exposed to the purpose and plan of God for your life. If

you do not take advantage of this exposure then you will come up in a second resurrection (Revelation 20:5) and then be required to make the choices you refused to make here and now. You will miss out on the one thousand year reign of Christ on this earth.

THE FESTIVALS OF GOD

Do you not realize that all the festivals of God - - including the weekly Sabbath - - deal specifically with the plan God is working out here on this earth and with **RECONCILIATION**? There is ONLY ONE WAY humans can be saved - - RECONCILED TO GOD- - and that is through Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12). And do you also know that the entire human race from Adam until now is anxiously waiting in great expectation for the manifestation of the SONS OF GOD - - the *reconciliation* of humans to God? (Romans 8:19-23)

Let us briefly review the annual holy days God has established for humans and understand their true significance so as to see what they should mean to each of us - - that salvation comes only through Jesus Christ through the observance of these holy days of God.

At this point we need to carefully study Leviticus 23. Notice carefully verses 1-2 which state: “The Lord said to Moses, speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘THESE ARE MY APPOINTED FEASTS, THE APPOINTED FEASTS OF THE LORD, which you are to proclaim as SACRED ASSEMBLIES.’ ” Please notice that God specifically stated “THESE ARE MY FEASTS!” He did NOT say “These are the Jewish feasts!” We must remember that ALL SCRIPTURE (Old and New Testaments) is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching (God’s ways), for rebuking (when we are wrong), for correction (when we error) and for training in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16). God says that He does NOT change (Malachi 3:6) - - and neither do His laws change. Jesus Christ is the same “yesterday, today and forever!” (Hebrews 13:8). The laws of God have authority over humans so long as they live (Romans 7:1). Zechariah 14 shows the return of Jesus Christ to rule this earth and it also shows that He will require every human being to keep His festivals. Christ will rule on this earth through His true saints for the one thousand year period that follows His return (Revelation 20:4-6, 5:8-10 and 1 Corinthians 6:2). Isaiah 11:2-9 describe what the earth will be like when Christ rules through His saints.

THE WEEKLY SABBATH

When you study Leviticus 23 you will find that the very first holy day God mentions AS HIS is that of the weekly Sabbath (verse 3). Jesus Christ stated plainly that the weekly

Sabbath WAS MADE FOR MAN and not man made FOR the Sabbath (Mark 2:27). Genesis 2:2-3 state clearly that GOD BLESSED THE SEVENTH DAY AND MADE IT HOLY TIME. Then verse 28 of Mark 2 clearly states that Jesus Christ is LORD OF THE SABBATH DAY. Each week we have a day in which to delight in God and His purpose for our lives (Isaiah 58:13-14). Jesus Christ is NOT Lord of the first day of the week ("Sun day" - - the day of Sol the sun god. That day was named after the pagan "sun" god for humans who were worshippers of the sun. Apostate church leaders took it on themselves to "change" the day of worship from the seventh day of the week (the day God made holy at the very beginning) to the first so as to appease the sun worshippers of that day. In the Catholic Encyclopedia we find the Catholic Church bragging that it (NOT God) changed the day of worship from the seventh day of the week to Sunday. They scoff at Protestants claiming they have no authority for Sunday worship and that by worshipping on Sunday they are submitting to the dictates of the Catholic Church. The simple truth is that GOD DOES NOT CHANGE AND NEITHER DO HIS LAWS!

We need to understand God's purpose for making the seventh day holy. The weekly Sabbath is a WEEKLY MEMORIAL that we humans are the creation of the Almighty God - - that He is our Creator God, our Sustainer, our Provider and our Healer AS WELL AS OUR SAVIOR. In other words, God gave us a specific day that is supposed to KEEP US IN WEEKLY CONTACT WITH AND REMEMBRANCE OF HIM! The reason humans do not recognize the God of the Bible [the reason He is UNKNOWN to the people of this world - - Acts 17:23] is because they have rejected the very sign God gave between Him and His human creations. That SIGN that God has given to His true people is HIS SABBATHS (Ezekiel 20:12 and 20). See also Ezekiel 22:8, 23:38 and 44:24. When Christ comes to rule this earth, ALL HUMANS ON EARTH WILL BE REQUIRED TO KEEP THE WEEKLY AND THE ANNUAL SABBATHS (Isaiah 66:22-23 and Zechariah 14:16-19). The punishment will be severe for those who refuse to keep God's weekly and annual Sabbaths.

The weekly SABBATH REST also pictures the SEVENTH ONE THOUSAND YEAR PERIOD [the millennium] of man's dwelling on this earth as God's creation. We are at this very moment close to the end of the six days (six thousand years) as a day pictures a thousand years in God's reckoning of time - - 2 Peter 3:8-9. God has allotted six thousand years for mankind to go its own way in rebellion against Him. But God is ready to intervene in the affairs of human beings since mankind has reached the point of totally destroying all life from this planet earth (see Matthew 24:20-22). Thankfully God will stop this total destruction by sending Christ back to this earth as King of kings and Lord of lords and usher in the kingdom of God where God's true servants will be made kings and priests and rule on this earth for that thousand years (see Revelation 20:4-6, 5:8-10 and 1 Corinthians 6:2).

THE PASSOVER: The Passover (Leviticus 23:5), and its true significance, is the very first step in God *reconciling* humans to Himself. The Passover represents the death of Jesus the Christ. He allowed His blood to be spilled to pay the penalty of our sins (Ephesians 1:7, Romans 5:6-11 and 1 Peter 1:18). We were redeemed from our former way of life **BY THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST** - - the Lamb of God. The Passover made this **REDEMPTION** possible. We, who are called today, are among the first to hope (the first fruits or the first *reconciled to God* - - see Ephesians 1:12). Do we realize that we have been called to become *reconciled* so as to be the literal **SONS OF GOD, HEIRS OF GOD AND JOINT HEIRS WITH JESUS CHRIST** (Romans 8:17)? If we respond to God we will **SHARE CHRIST'S GLORY!** Study also James 1:18.

Thus, the Passover must be the most important point in our lives since it is the beginning step of our *reconciliation to God*. Do we each examine ourselves during the Passover as God commands (1 Corinthians 11:27-32) to see if we are developing the very character of God? Thus, from this scripture we can see that observing the Passover was a very important practice in the New Testament Church Christ founded and the original apostles followed.

UNLEAVENED BREAD: The seven days of unleavened bread (Leviticus 23:6-8) picture the struggle those of us whom God has *reconciled* through the blood of Christ face as we practice putting sin out of our lives as we put leavening out of our homes for seven days. 1Corinthians 5:7-8 shows that the Feast of Unleavened Bread was kept by the New Testament Church.

The significance of this annual holy day season is to show us that we are to be *reconciled to God* through putting sin out of our lives. This is an **ANNUAL REMINDER** that we are the spiritual property of God Almighty - - we are the **RECONCILED SONS OF GOD!**

WAVE SHEAF OFFERING

We need to consider Leviticus 23:9-10 before going further because these verses speak of a wave sheaf offering - - composed of **THE FIRST GRAIN** or the **FIRST FRUITS OF THE HARVEST**. The people were not allowed to benefit from their harvest **UNTIL AFTER** this wave sheaf had been offered to **AND ACCEPTED BY GOD**. These requirements were given by God for specific purposes. This wave sheaf offering was representative of Jesus Christ and His offering of His life as a ransom for all mankind. Notice John 20:17, which takes place just after Jesus had been resurrected from the dead **AS THE FIRST FRUITS OF SALVATION**. Jesus first revealed Himself to Mary Magdalene and she was overjoyed and started to touch Him. Note that He forbade her

saying “Touch me not for I have not ascended to my Father.” He must first ascend to the Father and be ACCEPTED as the sacrificed Savior of mankind - - the wave sheaf offering that had to be accepted by the Father. Obviously the Father accepted His sacrifice and Jesus returned to earth for He later allowed the disciples to touch Him.

The spiritual significance of this is that Jesus was the FIRST BORN from the dead (study 1 Corinthians 15:20-23). Romans 8:23 goes further and shows that we, as true Christians, have the FIRST FRUITS of the Spirit. As James 1:18 says, we are the first fruits of all He created. See also Romans 8:28-30, Colossians 1:15, and 18 and Hebrews 12:23. Thus, all these scriptures show God is using His special Holy Days to RECONCILE human beings to Himself - - thus, THE FEASTS OF RECONCILIATION!

PENTECOST: Pentecost (Feast of weeks - - Leviticus 23:15-17 and Exodus 34:22) is the festival that depicts those whom God is *reconciling* AS HIS FIRSTFRUITS through a special anointing of the Holy Spirit which empowers them to put sin out of their lives so as to please God and ultimately become His spirit composed sons. The New Testament Church kept the feast of Pentecost (Acts 2). Please study Acts 1:5 and 8, 2 Corinthians 1:21-22, Ephesians 1:13-14, 2 Corinthians 5:5 and 1 John 2:20 and 27. There are many more scriptures that confirm these truths. Other scriptures that show the New Testament church kept the Feast of Pentecost are: Acts 20:16 and 1 Corinthians 16:8.

TRUMPETS: Trumpets depict the time when Christ returns and glorifies those *reconciled* to God and redeemed through the blood of Christ. They become the literal spirit composed sons of God, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ (Romans 8:16-17) and become kings and priests in the world to come (1 Corinthians 15:49-54, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and Revelation 20:5-6). You need to study these passages very carefully so as to grasp the fact that you are being given the chance to be RECONCILED WITH GOD

ATONEMENT: Atonement goes hand in hand with the feast of trumpets in that both festivals depict the time when those *reconciled* to God and redeemed will be glorified with Christ and be ready to rule the earth with Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords. This is when true RECONCILIATION occurs.

FEAST OF TABERNACLES: This festival depicts the one thousand year period during which God will use those who have been *reconciled* throughout history (the dead saints and those still alive when Christ returns) to bring *reconciliation* to all humans living on earth during that time period. The weekly Sabbath is another holy day that God gave to depict the *reconciling* of humans to God through Jesus Christ during the millennium - - the weekly Sabbath pictures that MILLENIAL SABBATH OF REST FROM SIN Paul spoke of in Hebrews 4. As verse 9 states clearly: “There remains, then, a SABBATH

REST for the people of God.” The Greek word used for the word translated “rest” in this passage is *sabbatismos* which means SABBATH KEEPING. Thus, “There is therefore a Sabbath keeping for the people of God.”

LAST GREAT DAY: This is the period of time God has allocated for all humans who have lived and died since Adam be given the opportunity to be *reconciled* to God through Jesus Christ. Please note that *reconciliation* is the prime theme through all of God’s holy days. The feast of tabernacles is truly important in light of *reconciliation* in that it is the specific period of time that God is preparing the earth for the billions of people who will come out of their graves in what the Bible calls “the second resurrection” - - billions of people who have lived and died throughout history without having been given the chance for this *RECONCILIATION*. This is the time Ezekiel is speaking of in chapter 37 and confirmed by John in Revelation 20:5 - - the rest of the dead (those not in the first resurrection of true saints) will NOT be resurrected until the thousand years are over.”

With this brief review of the Holy Days of God, do you now see more clearly why God has commissioned His true servants with the MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION and the MESSAGE OF RECONCILIATION? Carefully study 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 and drink in of its meaning. This ministry of *reconciliation* is the message God gives to His true servants.

I have an important question to ask all of you. Did you hear this “MESSAGE OF RECONCILIATION” preached during your last feast? And, did you study about this “GOSPEL OF RECONCILIATION” during the feast? After your feast, will you now have a greater knowledge and appreciation of God’s festivals and the fact that all God’s holy days point to and explain RECONCILIATION and the “GOSPEL” that teaches us about this *reconciliation*? This is the “Gospel that Jesus taught!”

There are about two thousand groups that have come out of the Worldwide Church of God. This publication is specifically directed toward and about the different “*Churches of God!*” The Bible is very clear in that there is *only one* TRUE CHURCH OF GOD. Yet many groups make the claim to be that “*one and only* true church!” What about the other 1999 “Churches of God?”

THE PROBLEM

The problem is that all these groups view “the church” as an *organization of people* with a specific geographic location and with a specific leadership made up of men. But is this *the Bible definition* of “THE TRUE CHURCH?” The problem that exists in the different “Churches of God” today reminds me of what Paul encountered in Corinth (1 Corinthians

1:11-17 and chapter 3:1-15). Please study this scripture carefully and you will see this carnal controversy repeated in the “churches of God” today.

I state with the Apostle Paul. “For there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? For when one says ‘I follow Paul,’ and another says, ‘I follow Apollos.’ Are you not mere men?” (1 Corinthians 3:3-4). Verse 5 then shows that the minister is only a *servant*. Then verses 6-9 states clearly: “I planted the seed and Apollos watered it, BUT GOD MADE IT GROW. So neither he who plants nor he who waters IS ANYTHING, BUT ONLY GOD, who makes things grow. The man who plants and the man who waters have (or are supposed to have) ONE PURPOSE .” And that purpose is RECONCILIATION TO GOD and TOWARD EACH OTHER. Is God not inspiring Paul to embarrass the Corinthians for following men rather than God? What about Galatians 5:15? Does this not describe the different “Churches of God” today? Isn’t anyone concerned with what God thinks about the present situation among those who “claim” to represent Him? Where does 1 Corinthians 13 fit into the current situation with the church? Do the words of God mean anything to the different groups (Isaiah 66:2)? How will we answer Christ when He calls us to an accounting - - and we will be held accountable!

OUR PRACTICE

We never attempt to draw members from other groups. If others seek to fellowship with us we do not turn them away. We teach them that ***their primary fellowship is to be with God the Father and with Jesus the Christ.*** We follow God’s instructions as found in Romans 14. We find verse 4 very informative. We are not to judge another’s servant. In this case the one we tend to judge is ACTUALLY God’s begotten child (see also verse 13).

What about the seven churches addressed in Revelation, chapters 2 and 3? All seven had problems but GOD DID NOT CONDEMN THEM - - He admonished them to repent and overcome these defects. In recent months a minister I have known since he was a youth spoke to a group other than his affiliation. His church rebuked him publicly for doing this. Clearly this church organization would have condemned all seven of the churches mentioned in Revelation 2 and 3. That group, and many others, would have condemned the apostle Paul for he spoke to any and all who would listen to him. A true minister of God speaks where God inspires him to speak and he speaks the word of God from the Bible and is NOT controlled by a church board. A true minister is A MINISTER OF GOD - - and not a minister of an organized “church” body. Should we not all begin to follow the admonition from God found in 2 Corinthians 5:17-20?

SUMMATION

Those reading this have now been exposed to the very plan and purpose of God. You now have some decisions to make about your future. There is only one way you can get out of this life ALIVE and that is the way described in this article. Adam and Eve were given the chance to follow God's way but rejected it and mankind has paid the penalty ever since. Cain, the first born son to Adam and Eve, was given the chance to obey God but chose to disobey. Esau had the opportunity to carry out the blessings God promised to Abraham but he chose to "SELL" it for a bowl of soup. Solomon was given the chance to carry the blessings onward to Israel but he let his human nature and lusts trip him up so he failed. We all need to learn from these examples and others mentioned in the Bible. But will we? The responsibility and your eternal future is now squarely in your hands. *We have now fulfilled our responsibility toward you!*

If any have questions you should write, send an email or phone us for more answers from the Bible. We are here to *serve* you!