

The West Meadow  
By Pastor Wes Higgins

If we were to go back in time and look at first century Christianity, what would it look like? The first thing we might notice is there would be no New Testament. There would be letters and some of the gospels circulating in the latter half of the first century, but the only text that was considered sacred and Holy was what we call the Old Testament. That was all they had. It was the basics “for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete” (2 Timothy 3:16-17, NKJV). The next thing you might notice was the day of worship was the Sabbath, what we call Saturday. In later centuries it was the Church of Alexandria and Rome that strived to win the church from worship on the 7<sup>th</sup> day. Early church writings show that up to the 5<sup>th</sup> century most Christians still observed the Sabbath, not Sunday. (See Socrates Scholasticus, Early Church Historian 300-430 AD, book 5, ch 22) The Jewish and Gentile Christians alike followed the scripture – the Old Testament and the examples of Jesus and all of the apostles, including Paul.

Another thing you would notice was the observance of religious holy days. Christmas, Easter and all the religious holidays kept today are not mentioned in the New Testament nor were they commonly observed for centuries. What the New Testament Church observed were the Holy Days of God (see Leviticus 23). We find them listed as observed by Christs, the apostles, and the early church throughout the gospels and Acts as well as being referenced to in the letters of Peter, James, John, and Paul.

We would find the first century Christians observing the Passover, with the New Covenant understanding of the symbols of the wine and the bread with the addition of the New Covenant foot washing. As I wrote earlier, we would see them keeping the commandments and laws of God as written in the Holy Scripture, but they would be keeping them with new zeal and understanding by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It has been said that as much as a third of the Epistles are direct or indirect quotes from the Old Testament explained with New Covenant understanding. One other thing you would notice if you spent much time with the early Christians – no one ate unclean meats. The Scripture from which the New Testament Christians were taught clearly teaches what is food, and what is not.

In short, as we look back at the early church, even as far as the 5<sup>th</sup> century, we see a Christianity visibly different than we see today. Both Paul and Jude warned the Brethren to remain in the faith that was delivered to them. (see 2 Thessalonians 2:15 and Jude 3).

Are the differences good or bad? You chose – you who are to judge the angels – you judge.