

An Analysis Of The New Changes Relating  
To The Old And New Covenants

**1) ALL OLD TESTAMENT LAWS ARE DONE AWAY WITH THE OLD COVENANT UNLESS SPECIFICALLY RE-ITERATED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.** In January 1995 Mr Tkach introduced a number of changes based on a "new" understanding on the old and new covenants. The changes relating to the understanding of the covenants brought about changes on the Sabbath, tithing, the Holy Days and unclean meats which we will look at next. The basis of these new teachings is the belief that all Old Testament laws are done away/voluntary with the abolition of the old covenant and only if they are re-iterated in the New Testament or new covenant are they valid for christians today. In the Worldwide News(10/1/95) Mr Tkach wrote, "**The old covenant, as a package of laws regulating a relationship between God and His people, is obsolete. Of course, not every law in the old covenant is done away - many of those laws are repeated in the New Testament, but the old covenant itself, as a package, is obsolete.**"

In the January 5, 1995 PGR he also wrote, "In other words, we observe the principles of the Ten Commandments, not because they were given at Mt Sinai, but because Jesus Christ and the apostles commanded them in the new covenant. Again, Paul wrote expressly that the old covenant, written on tables of stone(The Ten Commandments), has ended and the new covenant has come in. The reason we do not murder, steal, commit adultery, worship idols, etc. is because Jesus tells us not to, and because His Spirit dwells in us through faith in Him, not because they are written on tables of stone. These commandments do reflect the mind of God, but God has now written a new covenant on our hearts, are we are bound to Him by it, not by the old one. The old covenant is now ended and the new has come. Paul's point is that to bring the physical figure back in, as a requirement of salvation, is to minimise the value of the true reality. **We are not saved by grace through faith in Christ plus the Sabbath, or plus circumcision, or plus the sacrifices, or plus anything.** We are saved by grace through faith in Christ, period."

There is some very good material in the Worldwide News article(10/1/95) introducing part 1 on the covenants. Before he starts to discuss its impact specifically on the Sabbath and tithing about 3/4's through, it is very good. I'd say about 90-95% accurate. It's when he starts discussing their impact on the Sabbath, tithing and Holy Days, etc., that the article really goes off the track. The idea that only if laws are re-iterated in the New Testament are they valid today has led Pasadena to say that the Sabbath, Holy Days and tithing are all voluntary because they are supposedly not re-iterated in the New Testament and therefore not a part of the new covenant for christians. We shall soon see that all three of those are re-iterated in the New Testament.

Paul tells us some of, if not all, the Old Testament laws which are no longer in force in Hebrews 9:9-10 where he says, "It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience - **concerned ONLY with foods(offerings, that is) and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.**" It says that these four things(sacrifices, food & drink offerings, washings and fleshly ordinances) were imposed only until the time of reformation when Christ's sacrifice did away with their necessity. It says those four were imposed UNTIL that time. They are no more, not transformed, nor is there anything concrete in Hebrews 8 to 10 that clearly says the Sabbath, Holy Days or tithing are transformed. It's discussing the abolition of the Levitical priesthood, in particular, and the old covenant, not the transformation of any laws which were amongst the terms of the covenant.

Christ said in Matthew 5:18-19, "**For assuredly I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.** Whosoever therefore breaks one of the least of the commandments, and teaches men to do so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." That is the principle we work upon in determining which Old Testament laws are still valid today. Unless they can't be applied to our modern age or they can only be administered by a civil government they are valid today.

In the above article Mr Tkach also wrote, "Some people think that Christ liberates us from the law so that we can be more selfish." Rather than teaching that we should go over and above what is commanded the new teaching is that we should do these things because we love God and want to serve others, **THOUGH NONE OF IT IS COMMANDED OR IS REQUIRED FOR SALVATION.** The emphasis on become self governing and that we should obey God because we open-heartedly want to serve God and respond to all He has given to us is a good one but they are trying to do it in a bait-and-grab way. They try and focus everyone on love and then take the need away for law at all and creating loophole after loophole to disobey God. You cannot have love without law and neither should we go to the other extreme and constantly emphasise law, law, law all the time while neglecting love - having a heart that does want to respond to God's call and wants to obey God and serve others wholeheartedly because we believe in it and we're committed to it.

God, in one sense, began the old covenant in embryo with Abraham. We read how God says to Abraham in Genesis 17:7, "I will establish my covenant between me and you and **YOUR DESCENDANTS** after you." Because of Abraham's obedience the promise of national blessings became unconditional, though God did not promise when. Because of Israel's infidelity the promise of awesome national wealth and blessings has only come in these last days. When God promised to make Israel great at Mt Sinai the blessings of Leviticus 26 would come at whatever time they wholeheartedly kept God's laws.

A covenant is a mutual agreement between two living parties to do certain things containing terms of the agreement. A testament differs from a covenant as a testament or will is where a person wills certain of his possessions to another upon his death. To be technical, as the Hebrew and Greek also bear out, the New Testament should be called the New Covenant as it spells out the terms of the new covenant, as the Old Testament spelled out the terms of the old covenant. The old covenant was symbolically a marriage agreement in which Israel promised to obey God and He would in turn protect and provide for them. "Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and **keep my covenant** then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people, for all the earth is mine, and you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation"(Exod.19:5-6). God would provide all of the blessings recorded in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 if they would obey all of His laws. The Lord God, who was actually Jesus Christ(1 Cor.10:4), became Israel's husband. In Jeremiah 31:32 you read, "My covenant they brake, although I was **a husband** unto them." Israel, by agreeing to obey God and not commit adultery by whoring after other gods, bound themselves to God, who in turn promised to remain faithful and bless them with great national blessings.

The tablets of the covenant on which the Ten Commandments(Duet.9:9) were written plus the book of the covenant(Exod.24:7) which contained the other terms of the covenant - the statutes found in Exodus 21-23 - were placed in the ark of the covenant which symbolised the marriage agreement between Israel and God. The Old Covenant was not a set of laws that were omitted once the New Covenant was instituted. The Old Covenant was symbolically a marriage agreement between the nation of Israel and God. The sacrifices, ceremonial and ritualistic laws were added later after the covenant was sealed with blood(Exod.24:8, Jer.7:22-23,Gal.3:19) as a reminder on the sins they committed in the wilderness and as a reminder that there would come the ultimate sacrifice which pointed them to Christ(Gal.3:24).

The statement that the package of laws in the Old Testament are done away merely because the old covenant is obsolete highlights a simple misunderstanding about the difference between an agreement and law which I will address in the next paragraph but let me state that **NEVER** have we said that the old covenant was still alive - **ONLY** the new covenant. The old covenant is **NOT** the laws that Israel had to keep to fulfill their part of the agreement!

If I promised to give you a BMW to replace your old car if you keep within the traffic laws for a whole year what I give you and what you are to do is the agreement while the traffic laws are something separate. **Keeping those laws, as opposed to the traffic laws themselves, is the terms of our little agreement.** Does doing away with the agreement do away with the need to keep the traffic laws? No, because the keeping of them, **not the laws themselves**, are the terms of the agreement. The same applies with God's law. The abolition

of the covenant of itself does not do anyway with the laws that formed a part of it. Please think about it. That is a very important point to consider. **The statement that the package of laws in the Old Testament are done away merely because the old covenant is obsolete is therefore an assumption and requires more proof than that to be true!**

With regards to the new covenant the terms we have to keep are much the same. The terms from God - what He promises us are **completely different** - the Holy Spirit, eternal life, the opportunity to rule as kings and priests in the World Tomorrow to straighten this world out, etc. These gifts from God that He promises with the new covenant make it so completely different from the old covenant even though we still have to obey Him. One promised physical blessings, the other promises far greater spiritual blessings. That it's stated that the covenants are different doesn't prove the laws will be different. **Keeping** the laws, **NOT** the laws themselves, are the terms of the two covenants.

It has been said that the Sabbath and the other Ten Commandments were never given by God before the Exodus. **God said to Abraham that he kept "my commandments, my statutes and my laws"(Gen.26:5) - a complete set of law.** Before they even reached Mt Sinai and the old covenant was proposed God said, "How long do you refuse to keep my commandments (plural) and my laws"(Exodus 16:28) to Israel and we are told Moses made "known(to them) the statutes of God and His laws"(Exod.18:16). God renewed to Israel the lost knowledge of God's law and statutes at Mt Sinai, while no doubt adding others, as many of those laws and statutes were lost during their Egyptian slavery. **Since the commandments and statutes were in existence prior to the establishment of the Old Covenant therefore the abolition of the Old Covenant did not do away with what it did not bring into existence. THE FAULT WAS WITH THE PEOPLE(Heb.8:8) NOT WITH GOD'S WONDERFUL LAW.**

God knew that Israel would break the covenant(Deut.31:20) because they didn't have a heart to obey Him(Deut.5:28-29) since they were never promised His Holy Spirit. God wanted to teach mankind a valuable lesson through Israel's experience - that without God's Holy Spirit mankind cannot submit to God and His way of life(1 Cor.10:11), even with the genetic strengths of being Abraham's descendants and having all of God's laws known to them. (**Note:** All nations have different strengths and weaknesses. The Japanese and Germans are very industrious people. Proportionately more geniuses come from the Jewish race while proportionately the black races produce more elite basketball players and sprinters. Israel's genetic strengths lie in the areas of leadership, administration and inventiveness. While different races have different strengths and weaknesses, in terms of human worth we are all equal in the eyes of God with the same awesome spiritual potential.)

Israel eventually broke the covenant. We read that in Jeremiah 11:10, "They went after other gods to serve them: the House of Israel and the House of Judah **have broken my covenant** which I made with their fathers." Because they had strayed so horribly far into sin God was left with no choice but to divorce Israel. "And when I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery **I had to put her away, and give her a bill of divorce**"(Jer.3:8).

After that divorce(maybe His death also) the God of the Old Testament, Jesus Christ, became free to marry the church at His second coming(Rev.19) to whom He is making and will make the new covenant. The new covenant, as like the old, has been sealed with blood - that of the death of Jesus Christ. When we partake of the Passover we partake of the wine which symbolises the blood of the new covenant(Matt.26:28) and the cup represents the new covenant in His blood(Luke 22:20). The new covenant is based on better promises (Heb.8:6) including the giving of the Holy Spirit to help us overcome and live by the spirit of the law and that of eternal life born into the very family of God!

"For this is the covenant that I will make with the House of Israel after those days, says the Lord; I will put **MY LAWS** into their mind and write them in their heart"(Heb.8:10) There will be laws, God's laws, the same laws which stand fast forever(Ps.111:7,8), but this time they will be written in the hearts and minds of the people. They will be "written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in tablets of stone, but in the fleshly tablets of the heart"(2 Cor.3:3).

The new covenant will not be made with those who remain spiritual Gentiles. The covenants and the promises pertain to Israel(Rom.9:4). The Gentiles were cut off from the covenants(Eph.2:12 - plural) and from God but now God, through Jesus Christ's sacrifice and calling them into the church and receiving the Holy Spirit, has granted access to physical Gentiles by grafting them into spiritual Israel - the church(Rom.11:17). Just like a branch grafted onto a tree, God replaced the disobedient and unbelieving "branches" of the Israel of God(the natural olive tree, Rom.11:17) with "wild olive branches" - those not directly descended from Abraham, but who have been called of God and become spiritual Israelites(Rom.2:29). When physical Israel does repent in the millennium and Great White Throne Judgment they will be able to be grafted back into the true Israel of God who are the true people of God(Rom.11:23). Christ's testament or will did not have any force until His death(Heb.9:17). When Christ died then His heirs(Gal.3:29) had the right to the promise of eternal life made possible through the Holy Spirit. God truly has a wonderful plan for all mankind!

God is preparing the Kingdom of God in dual stages. He is working both through physical Israel AND spiritual Israel - the church. **After Christ returns physical Israel will become God's model millennial nation! After a far greater exodus back from slavery than that out of Egypt(Jer.16:14-15) they will turn to God and be an outstanding example of obedience(Isa.61:9,62:1-2) to the Gentiles who will eagerly from that time on seek to follow(Zech.8:23)!** They

will be become leading nations on the earth because of their example to the Gentiles and be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation as God originally intended. Repentance, baptism and believing the message and messenger of the new covenant(Mal.3:1) - Jesus Christ and His gospel are the terms of the new covenant. When we repent we are making a covenant - the new covenant - between us and God to quit sinning and keep His laws and allow Him to write those laws in our heart!

**2) THE WATERING-DOWN OF THE SABBATH.** The Sabbath has been watered-down in a number of ways. The church has already made the change that the Sabbath begins at dark and not sunset. In a sermon given in Akron, Ohio(17/4/93), Mr Dean Blackwell stated that Christians do not need to attend services every Sabbath. He said that they may prefer to take advantage of nice weather and go on a picnic instead. Mr Tkach in a taped sermon in mid-1992 stated that Sabbath services may be skipped if one is "too tired to come". Also we read how the church no longer believes Sabbath-keeping is a pre-requisite to salvation.

In the Worldwide News(10/1/95) which introduced the new teaching on the new covenant the following comments were made about its impact on the Sabbath, **"It is not correct to say that God demands that a breadwinner lose his job over the Sabbath.** He should work toward devoting the Sabbath to God, but for the church to demand that a person under all circumstances not to work on the Sabbath is to miss the point...Scripture says that those who don't provide for their families are worse than an unbeliever, and common sense says that too. **If the choice is between working on the Sabbath, and providing food for the family, it is not a sin to work on the Sabbath.** It's not the ideal that we should strive for, but again, we should not apply old covenant rules to the new covenant Sabbath. They aren't doing it for selfish benefit, but to avoid hunger and putting their families on the street. Some might call it a lack of faith, but other people might call it appropriate."

In the PGR(5/1/95) which introduced part 2 of the new teaching on the new covenant the following comments were made about the Sabbath, "Why don't we find the Sabbath commanded in the new covenant? The Sabbath foreshadowed the entering into the promise of God. Just as the sacrifices foreshadowed the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the sins of the whole world, so also the Sabbath foreshadowed the rest from our own labours, the rest God gives from our sins through faith in Christ(Heb.4:8-16). The unbelieving Israelites were not allowed to enter the Promised Land(Heb.3:19), a 'Sabbath-rest', but we enter, through faith(Heb.4:3), into the better promise - the new life in Jesus Christ, the new life of freedom from sin, freedom from our own labours and into the work of Jesus Christ on our own behalf and in us. The Sabbath pictured the promise. It pictured Israel's entrance into the promised land, and it pictured the Sabbath rest that remains for the people of God - entering into eternal life, the life of the age to

come, the new, regenerated, born-again life in Jesus Christ, free from sin and death.

"Colossians 2:16-17 tells us that the reality, or substance, is Christ, and now that He has come now that we have the reality and have entered into it, there is no more requirement for the physical figure, just as there is no more need for the physical sacrifices.

"The old covenant is not applicable to Christians. Our relationship with God is governed by the new covenant and is based on faith in Jesus Christ, not on the law...Does this mean that we should stop keeping the Sabbath? No, it doesn't. We will continue to keep the Sabbath. To set aside the Sabbath every week to assemble together is appropriate and fitting...**But to say that the Sabbath is a binding command on Christians in the New Testament, and to forbid employment as a requirement for membership, is to misunderstand and misapply the scriptures...**

"The church must no longer teach what it has come to see is not true. The Sabbath does not appear in any of the 'sin lists' in the New Testament. Nor does it appear in any of the commands or lists of virtues in the New Testament. But wasn't the Sabbath command given at creation and therefore binding on all humanity through all time? Let's take a closer look at the question. At creation, God rested on the seventh day and sanctified it. But we also need to understand that at creation, God gave no command to human beings regarding keeping the day; as a Sabbath. The day is not called the Sabbath at creation; it is called the seventh day. There is no commandment regarding the Sabbath until after the Exodus. The Sabbath commandment is based on God's rest in the creation account, but there is simply no biblical teaching that a Sabbath commandment existed before God formed a relationship with the Israelites, a relationship codified at Mt Sinai.

**"Even if the Sabbath were a command from creation, which it isn't, Colossians 2;16-17 tells us that the Sabbath is the shadow, and that Christ is the reality to which it pointed. Now that the reality, Christ, has come, the shadow as a binding law is no longer in force, regardless of when it began...**To come to Christ in faith is to enter 'the Sabbath rest that remains for the people of God'. Faith in Christ brings freedom from sin and therefore fulfills what the Sabbath symbolised. That is the New Testament keeping of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is expanded in the New Testament to its full and glorious meaning and intent. To think that it, as an old covenant command, is still a requirement for the people of God is to miss the point, to minimise the coming of the Messiah, and is no better than going back to animal sacrifices and circumcision. We therefore keep the Sabbath voluntarily, recognising it as a biblical pattern for worship...If we make it a requirement for salvation or for membership, we are misusing it and imposing it in an inappropriate way upon the new covenant in the blood of Jesus Christ."

Let's look at some of those points. First of all, let's read what God says about the Sabbath in Leviticus 23:3. "Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation." According to the Australian Oxford Dictionary(p.178) the word convocation is defined as a "summon(s) to assemble". To be summoned is to be required to be there except for good reasons such as distance or sickness. We should not forsake the "assembling ourselves together, as is the manner of some"(Heb.10:25).

**As far as the incredible comment that it's O.K. to work on the Sabbath if your job is at risk it completely neglects the concept of implicit faith in God. The same reasoning used would mean that it would be O.K. to break any of the other of the Ten Commandments such as stealing if it means providing for our family!** Should we break one of the Ten Commandments in order to perform an act of "love"? Love cannot exist outside of law. Law is the riverbed on which the waters of love flow. Such a case would not be love because we would not be showing love to God by defiling His Sabbath and not giving Him the opportunity to work out the situation for us by lacking the faith to step out and obey Him. Thousands of members have put their jobs on the line over the Sabbath. Mr Armstrong once commented that in about 90% of cases the situation worked out fine or if they did lose their job they soon got a better one. With God having a great track record in providing for us in such cases it destroys the very necessity for members to even take that liberal approach.

To support this new liberal idea that you can break the Sabbath for humanitarian employment a couple of examples are cited. They quote John 5:16-17 to say that Jesus didn't mind using the word work to describe what He was doing on the Sabbath. They say He was working on the Sabbath and not sinning. Quite a ridiculous example when you consider His work is holy and has a spiritual purpose while ours is secular. The next example is where they quote Mark 2:23-26 where the disciples picked a few ears of grain stating that a change in what God allows has occurred because the Israelites weren't allowed to collect food back at the Exodus. The two examples are not the same because the Israelites were labouring heavily to collect the food while the Israelites only picked a few grains plus we must not forget that God provided double the day before and specifically told them to rest.

Matthew Henry in his commentary takes this point of view which fits in perfectly with our old understanding when Mr Armstrong was alive. He writes regarding verses 1-8:

"Being in the corn-fields, the disciples began to pluck the ears of corn: the law of God allowed it (Deuteronomy 23:25). This was slender provision for Christ and his disciples; but they were content with it. The Pharisees did not quarrel with them for taking another man's corn, but for doing it on the Sabbath day. Christ came to free his followers, not only from the corruptions of the Pharisees, but from **their(the Pharisees) unscriptural rules**, and justified what they did.



The greatest shall not have their lusts indulged, but the meanest shall have their wants considered.

"Those labours are lawful on the Sabbath day which are necessary, and Sabbath rest is to forward, not to hinder Sabbath worship. Needful provision for health and food is to be made; but when servants are kept at home, and families become a scene of hurry and confusion on the Lord's day, to furnish a feast for visitors, or for indulgence, the case is very different. Such things as these, and many others common among professors, are to be blamed. The resting on the Sabbath was ordained for man's good (Deuteronomy 5:14). No law must be understood so as to contradict its own end. **And as Christ is the Lord of the Sabbath, it is fit the day and the work of it should be dedicated to him.**"

In an article entitled "Does the New Covenant do away with the Letter of the Law" Eric Snow writes:

"Now Pasadena maintains: 'But it is not correct to say that God demands that a breadwinner lose his job over the Sabbath...If the choice is between working on the Sabbath and providing food for the family, it is not a sin to work on the Sabbath...'

**"It's quite a leap** to go from doing divine miracles of healing, emergencies, and some casual grain plucking(which sure doesn't sound like serious gleaning) to saying working at your local Burger King restaurant or a General Motors assembly plant is acceptable. **The precariousness of this extrapolation is evident for all to see.**"

The last example Mr Tkach quotes is where David ate the consecrated shewbread which Christ said was unlawful. The shewbread had already served its purpose for the day. If God did allow them to eat after the day it served its purpose then the law was an added Jewish law. If it was prohibited to be eaten by others aside from the priests then it was an ox-in-a-ditch emergency as one can see from the original story in 1 Samuel 21:1-6.

Hebrews 4:9 says that there remains a Sabbath day for the people of God while Paul uses terms such as "obsolete", "growing old", "ready to disappear" and "taken away" for the Levitical priesthood. If one is obsolete and the other remains then they obviously do not belong in the same category.

I'm amazed at how people are misquoting Colossians 2:16-17 of late. It does not say, "Do not judge anyone in regard to keeping a Sabbath or a Holy Day." It says, "Let no man judge **YOU**...regarding a festival or...sabbaths." The fact they were being judged in regarding those things shows they were keeping them. The pastor general has said that since the reality of what the shadows of the Sabbath and Holy Days picture has come in Christ they are no longer required based primarily on this scripture. If you read the verse carefully those things **are**

**shadows "of things TO COME" - future tense.** Since the person of Christ already has come and He has come through the spirit to help us grow, is the reality or substance, therefore, future things to come that Christ will do in the plan of God pictured by the second half of the Holy Days? Does the fulfilment of the events the Holy Days picture take away the obligation to keep them? It is purely an assumption to say that the coming of something a shadow pictures ALWAYS takes away the further necessity for the shadow to be kept. There's a common Protestant argument that because there is supposedly no such thing as holy time or holy places anymore we keep every day holy to God. To people who say that I'd say, "Well, when do you work?" We're told, six days shall you work and the seventh day is the Sabbath.

In Romans 14:5-6 Paul wrote, "One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks." Is Paul talking about how we keep the Sabbath in its "new transformed spirit intent" as it is claimed? The Sabbath is not mentioned here and the Sabbath is called a feast day, not of abstaining from food which is the context. Notice what the Expositor's Bible Commentary says about this passage: "The close contextual association with eating suggests that Paul has in mind a special day set apart for observance as a time for feasting or a time for fasting" (Vol.10,p.146).

Another passage pushed as a verse advocating the abolition of the Sabbath and the Holy Days is Galatians 4:9-10 in which Paul talks about not returning to the weak and beggarly elements and then describes how they "observe days and months and seasons and years." The Galatians were Gentiles and couldn't turn back to what they had never kept plus neither the Sabbath or Holy Days are specifically mentioned here nor are they called weak and beggarly elements elsewhere.

It has been said that the Sabbath and the other Ten Commandments were never given by God before the Exodus. If so, why did God say to Abraham that he kept "my commandments, my statutes and my laws" (Gen.26:5) - a complete set of law? How could God say, "How long do you refuse to keep my commandments(plural) and my laws" (Exodus 16:28) to Israel and Moses made "known(to them) the statutes of God and his laws"(Exod.18:16) before they even reached Mt Sinai and the old covenant was proposed? If God revealed even minor statutes back then is it reasonable to say that God had created the Sabbath but waited until the Exodus to give instructions as to how to keep it? We are told in the Ten Commandments that "**THE SEVENTH DAY** is the Sabbath OF THE LORD"(Exod.20:10). Notice He didn't say any seventh day and that it is the Sabbath of the LORD - the literal day of the week the Lord made a Sabbath, not any day we supposedly make holy by coming to worship Him. Mr Tkach said that

the Sabbath was not called the Sabbath at the creation, just the seventh day but in Exodus 20:11 in describing that creation He says, "For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth...and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the **SABBATH DAY** and hallowed it."

Let's look at the subject of whether the Sabbath, the Holy Days and tithing are required to be kept literally today in light of what happened in the first century when the church began. The Protestant world doesn't usually have a problem with the moral laws, it's usually those three things - the Sabbath, Holy Days and tithing that they want to have nothing to do with, which require we devote our time and money to God, because they are viewed as Jewish as they want to have nothing to do with Judaism.

Let's look at a very important point that I'd like the reader to consider. Think about how much of an uproar the transformation of the law on circumcision to something now voluntary made in the days of the apostles. It was a huge uproar that dogged them for many years. **Don't you think the transformation and relegation of the Sabbath, Holy Days and tithing to voluntary laws would have created a far greater uproar?** When you read through the gospels and the epistles there is nothing on the Sabbath, Holy Days and tithing that even remotely resembles a controversy even half as great as that as the transformation of the circumcision law. Given how fundamental Sabbath observance was, in particular, to Jewish society the lack of such a controversy shows that the view that it and the others were transformed and are now voluntary is very suspicious indeed.

To say that the Sabbath is voluntary is as ridiculous as saying any of the other Ten Commandments(not suggestions) are voluntary such as stealing, idolatry and murder. This is based on the belief that the Sabbath is the only one of the Ten Commandments that are not in the New Testament. That is incorrect. The Sabbath command **IS** in the New Testament. In Hebrews 4:9 it reads, "It is therefore the duty of the people of God to keep the Sabbath"(New Testament from Aramaic). In the New King James Version it reads, "There remains therefore a rest for the people of God." The word rest is used several times before this verse in this chapter. It is rendered from the Greek "katapausin", however in verse 9 the word rest comes an entirely different Greek word - "sabbatismos". The word literally means, as most margins show, "keeping of a Sabbath". The Sabbath-rest each week is a memorial of creation and a picture of the soon-coming millennial rest. Famous church historian Dr Samuele Bacchiocchi illuminates the Greek word further for us. He says,"This term occurs only once in the New Testament, but is used several times as a technical term for Sabbath-keeping in post-canonical literature by Plutarch, Justin, Epiphanius, the Apostolic Constitutions and the Martyrdom of Peter and Paul"(The Sabbath in the New Testament,p.75).

Isaiah 58:13-14 gives us the principle of how to keep the Sabbath. "If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath from doing your pleasure on **MY** holy day(if

it's His, then it is a specific day and not any day), and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord honourable, and you shall honour Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the Lord." Your ways means your business or work. Your pleasure means time-consuming hobbies and sports, etc. Your words is what we talk about on the Sabbath. We should want to talk about God's truth and way of life on the Sabbath rather than primarily focused on our work or hobbies or whatever. The Sabbath is a time to refocus and to draw close to God so we can stay as close to Him as possible for the following week. It should be a delight where we have time to pick up on extra prayer and study as well as the blessing of wholesome christian fellowship.

It is said that the Sabbath was the sign of the old covenant only, made only for Israel at that time and therefore is not required to be kept by christians today. It is strongly implied that the Sabbath was just given to ancient Israel and not meant to be a universal law for all mankind. Is the Sabbath meant for just Israel or for all mankind. Let's see what Christ Himself says in Mark 2:27, "The Sabbath was made for MAN, and not man for the Sabbath." Eric Snow in the abovementioned article says, "Now if the Sabbath was made for man, not just the Jews, this implies it still would exist even after God's special relationship with the Jews ended." It has been stated that the Sabbath was the sign of the old covenant. This is never specifically stated in the Bible. In Exodus 31, nearly 10 chapters after the old covenant is sealed, God made a separate perpetual covenant, in which the Sabbath was to be a sign that sanctified or set them apart as His people. If we, as spiritual Israelites, are keeping it today, it does much the same purpose of setting us apart and making us stand out from others. It is never called the sign of the old covenant in the Bible.

Just to conclude with on rebutting the new teachings on the Sabbath I would like to quote from a very fine memo by a member in Canada, Terry Deveau, that I pulled off the Internet which has a number of fine points on the Sabbath.

"Now, after this somewhat circuitous introduction, let us consider directly the question of the Sabbath. What stress is placed on the Sabbath as an institution, as compared to other aspects of the old covenant (sacrifices on every New Moon, for example)? Does God repeatedly emphasise to backsliding Israel His particular displeasure at their inadequate reverence for the sanctity of this institution? **Do we get the impression that the role of Sabbath observance is much more in God's eyes than simply living-up to terms of an arbitrary covenant? Do we get the impression that the Sabbath is more a tool that God uses to keep His people from descending into secularism, or even idolatry?**

"Do human beings need to struggle to 'earn a living' in this life? Can the rigours of this struggle distract one's attention from the spiritual aspects of life? Would it make sense that God would try to establish an institution for His people that would regularly refocus them on the spiritual? Would part of this reasonably

include an admonition to abstain from usual and necessary labours for a specific period of time? Unless the sanctity of this institution were to be clearly established, would human greed inevitably lead employers to require from their employees greater dedication to their job, should they wish to retain it, than to their worship of God?

"To conclude: of course the Sabbath exists! God created it and sanctified it shortly after His creation of the first humans. God gave man the Sabbath for his benefit. Man needs the Sabbath today for all the same reasons he has always needed it. God would never be so inhumane as to deprive mankind of such a critical device (which He says would exist as a perpetual covenant, Exod.31:16-17) necessary for man's spiritual health and growth...

"By sanctifying the Sabbath, God declares on HIS authority (higher than any other authority an individual may be subject to) that this time is set apart for spiritual use, and that any other authority which might attempt to require this time of any individual for some other purpose does so in defiance of God's supreme authority. So the point of sanctification is not to restrict what an individual may or may not do in this period of time, but to ensure that the individual has the freedom to use this time for spiritual pursuits. Whether he actually DOES or not is entirely up to him (her). God has never been in the business of legislating spirituality. The only kind of righteousness that interests God is the kind that is hungered and thirsted for, not legislated...

"While I'm on my soapbox, let me comment on the related question that seems to be very much in vogue: what is BINDING on Christians? This question just blows me away! It seems to me that to even ASK such a question is to demonstrate a very poor understanding of what Christianity is about. A related question is 'what is REQUIRED for salvation?' Christ said 'he who seeks to save his life will LOOSE it.' If you are trying to discover what is REQUIRED for salvation you are missing the point entirely. Christ also said that when we have done what is required of us we are nothing more than an 'unprofitable servant.' Don't ask what is BINDING, ask what is POSSIBLE! Try to discover just HOW mightily God can work His will through your life. **If anything IS binding on a Christian, he should be doing so much OVER and ABOVE that anyway that the merely BINDING is effectively inconsequential.**"

Do some of those comments help make it clear why God included it in the big ten, why God came down so heavily on it and quoted it as one of the reasons He sent Israel into captivity(Jer.17:21-22,27, Neh.13:15-18) and why He went to the trouble long before Israel even came into being to sanctify 24 set hours a week for us and didn't leave it just up to us to find the time ourselves?

There are other statements I have heard about with regard to the Sabbath but I feel a very important point to remember with regards to how Pasadena views the Sabbath is that Pasadena no longer believes in a literal re-creation week and

that Genesis 1 and 2 "may be a coded account that can encompass millions of years when properly interpreted and decoded". All Sabbath-keeping churches to the best of my research believe in a literal re-creation week. If the church no longer believes God literally rested on the 7th day of the week when He created Adam how might that effect how the church keeps the Sabbath in the future?

**3) TITHING IS NOW VOLUNTARY AND NOT COMMANDED.** In its statement about the new covenant the following was said about the subject of tithing in the Worldwide News(10/1/95). "As far as we know, tithing was not required in the days of Abraham. He seems to have done it voluntarily...Later, Jacob pledged that he would tithe to God, but this is also presented as a voluntary thing rather than a requirement...**Should we give less than a tithe, when the blessings we have are so much more glorious than those of the Israelites... Under the new covenant the tithe is VOLUNTARY, done out of love and allegiance to Jesus Christ."**

We have seen which of the Old Testament laws are still valid today and which ones are applicable to the New Covenant. Now let's go through a number of other scriptures which back up the fact that tithing is commanded and not just voluntary in the New Testament.

In Genesis we read that after Lot was kidnapped, God delivered Abraham's enemies into his hands(Gen.14:20) which included the spoils, so the spoils as a result became Abraham's to give. Of those spoils he gave a tithe or a tenth to Melchizedek(Heb.7:4) who we'll find out later was Jesus Christ. Tithing, whether as a voluntary custom or eternal command, was in existence before the Levitical Priesthood. When it says he "gave a tithe of all" some say it could mean it was a voluntary gift but at the same time it could also mean he gave that which was already an eternal command. The same holds true for Jacob's conversion when he vowed to pay tithes(Gen.28:22). This may be just like a teenager coming to conversion and promising to do that which He know God commands.

Though neither scripture on their own can be taken as proof one way or the other, the evidence of history strongly supports the belief that tithing was commanded by God and in existence even before Abraham. Notice what the historian Henry Lansdell says about this:"**The picture writings of Egypt, the cuneiform tablets of Babylonia, and early writers of Greece and Rome inform us that before the Bible was written, and apart therefrom, it was an almost universal practice among civilised nations for people to pay tithes to their gods; but none tell us when, or where, the practice began, or who issued the law for its observance**"(The Tithe in Scripture,p.7). The custom of tithing was well known before the time of Moses. Did God copy and give to His people a law based on a pagan custom? Or, did the pagans continue with a practice(though corrupted) which had been divinely revealed early in the history of mankind? God warns against imitating pagan forms of worship in Deuteronomy 12:29-30. Surely

God would not borrow a pagan custom. Granted it was a custom that pre-dated Abraham, it would have been part of the complete system of commandments, statutes and laws(Gen.26:4-5) that Abraham knew of in his day.

Let's now look at the most comprehensive passage of scripture on the subject of tithing in the New Testament - Hebrews 7. Beginning in verse 1 we read,"For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham **gave a tenth part of all**, first being translated 'king of righteousness' and then also king of Salem meaning 'king of peace', without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually." The fact that He was eternal shows that He was one and the same as Jesus Christ.

"Now consider how great this man was to whom even the great patriarch Abraham **gave a tenth of the spoils**. And indeed those who are the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have **a commandment to receive tithes** from the people **according to the law**, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham; but he whose genealogy is not derived from them **received tithes** from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. Now beyond all the contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better. Here mortal men **receive tithes**, but there He receives them of whom it is witnessed that He lives. (Though mortal men receive tithes, the tithe belongs to God to do what He wants to do with it - that is, His work) Even Levi, who **receives tithes, paid tithes** through Abraham, so to speak, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him (Indirectly by paying tithes through Levi one would be paying tithes to Melchizedek anyhow!).

"Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not according to the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, **of necessity there is also a change of the law**. For he of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar."

The whole passage talks about tithing. In fact, if you count up the number of times you'll find it mentioned 7 times in the first 10 verses, so the topic of who received tithes is the theme of the whole passage. What is the change of the law that was required? Was tithing to be abolished? Was it to be made voluntary as an act of generous pledging? Let's go back to verse 5 and read what the Bible itself says as the law that was to be changed. "And indeed those who are the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to **RECEIVE TITHES** from the people **ACCORDING TO THE LAW**, that is, from their brethren". According to this scripture it was who received the tithes which was the law that Paul was talking about. If tithing is still in force, was it now for the Levites who were

still sacrificing at the Temple when there was no need for the sacrifices anymore or who was it now?

The whole thrust of the argument is to show that the Melchizedek priesthood was far superior than the Levitical one. When Christ came and the priesthood was changed, did God change His financing system? Christians in Paul's day did not necessarily need to be instructed about whether to tithe. They did though, need to have it made clear that the Levitical Priesthood was superseded by that of Jesus Christ - the Melchizedek priesthood restored! And naturally, if they did tithe, the people wanted to know to which priesthood tithes were now to be paid. Through saying Levi paid tithes through Abraham, he was showing that Christ and whoever would represent Him could receive tithes if tithing was still in force, so the argument that the church can't receive tithes because tithes could only go to Levites does not hold water.

Is it voluntary or is it still commanded? If it is only voluntary there appears to be three inconsistencies with that argument. Firstly it says the law was changed, not abolished or annulled. Secondly, the context is all about who actually received the tithes and **no where** does it question whether if it was commanded or not. Lastly, if the change was to make it voluntary, then there would have been no need to go on about how Abraham received tithes for several verses when it was sufficient to show that Melchizedek was Christ and therefore His priesthood annulled the Levitical one and tithes are no longer necessary as a result.

How many tithes were there? In Numbers 18:21 we read:"And behold, I have given the children of Levi **ALL** the tenth in Israel for an inheritance for their service." The Levites were to have all this tithe for doing the work God had given them to do. In Deuteronomy 14:22-23 it says,"You shall truly tithe all the increase of your grain that the field produces **YEAR BY YEAR**. And you shall eat before the Lord your God, in the place where He chooses to make his name abide." Put these two scriptures together and it becomes clear that there was more than one tithe that was rotated around each year or that the one tithe was shared around for different purposes. The Festival tithe as we've come to know it was saved up for that purpose year by year - **every year** and was separate from the first tithe which was wholly the Levites or the third tithe for the poor which was collected every third year only.

Josephus in his book Antiquities of the Jews confirms this practice amongst the Jews:"Besides those two tithes, which I have already said you are to pay every year, the one for the Levites, the other for the Festivals, you are to bring every third year a third tithe to be distributed to those that want, to women also that are widows, and to children that are orphans"(Book IV,ch.8,sec.22). Each of the three tithes has a distinct purpose.

In Matthew 23:23 we read,"Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have neglected the weightier



matters of the law: justice, mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, **WITHOUT LEAVING THE OTHER UNDONE.**" Christ here in the New Testament said tithing was still a command for the people in His day. Here was a perfect chance to annul or make the command to tithe voluntary since His sacrifice was going to do away with the need for the Levitical priesthood but He instead upheld the command.

In Malachi 3:8-10 we read, "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed you?' In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse for you have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse that there may be food in my house and prove me now in this, says the Lord of Hosts." In the very last book shortly before the New Testament was going to be written, and we should add it is very much a prophetic book primarily for our day, God says we rob Him by not giving Him His tithes. Why would He place this scripture right here if He was shortly going to abolish it or make it voluntary? He could have just said in offerings only you have robbed me if He was shortly going to make it no longer a command. Another reason why tithing is mandatory is, if it weren't, human nature is such that most people would not pay their tithes! Let's not kid ourselves about that point! If God didn't make it necessary to make a law of tithing mankind would not faithfully render what belongs to Him as the supreme Landlord over the whole earth.

"It should be noted that, while God does bless individuals for paying tithes, the promise of material blessings He gave through Malachi are national in scope. Tithing here is representative of full obedience and reliance upon God. After calling for the people to faithfully tithe to Him, God says, 'And all nations shall call you blessed: for you shall be a delightful land' (Mal. 3:12)" (Is Tithing For Christians?, Vance Stinson).

God says He will provide us with all of our needs, though not necessarily all of our wants (Matt. 6:30-34). Tithing is a test much the same as the Sabbath. You have heard stories of how God always looks after those who keep His Sabbath even at the risk of their jobs. God will do the same for those who faithfully tithe to Him so in God's eyes the argument about not being able to afford to tithe doesn't wash. If you sincerely, as opposed to cynically, put Him to the test if you have to, He certainly can bless you in the way Malachi described if you genuinely need to have your faith bolstered. Most tithe-payers never accumulate great wealth and often God's blessings are neither immediate or apparent. Yet, thousands who "couldn't afford to tithe" but put their trust in God and paid the tithe anyway, have found through firsthand experience that God can indeed bestow material blessings on the tithe-payer. In reality the command to tithe and give offerings is not only a way of teaching generosity but also a test of faith.

God gives us everything - our food, clothing, shelter, money, the air we breathe and even life itself. "The very purpose of tithing is to express our gratitude, our heartfelt thanks to the one who has given so much to us. Rather than giving in

order to receive, the christian should give as an expression of thanks for what he has already received. He should realise he already has his blessing in hand when he gives the tenth to God...(It's) true, we pay tithes but tithing should always be done in a spirit of giving(Is Tithing For Christians?,Vance Stinson,p.8). God's church does not and never will police God's people on tithing. "Tithing and giving is God's way. Yet, we believe it is beneath dignity to beg or solicit the public for funds. We leave it to God to move on human hearts, leaving the result with Him, in faith, to provide every need"(T.C.Watch, inside cover). It's the ministry's duty to teach God's laws including faithful obedience to God's tithe. It's up to us to obey God and reap the blessings or not by our choice(Mal.3:8-10). It is not only a divinely-ordained way of giving, it also a personal act of worship and gratitude for our benefit for God never does or commands anything that isn't for our benefit.

**4) SECOND TITHE NO LONGER COMMANDED.** In the January 5, 1995 PGR Mr Tkach wrote the following, "What about saving second tithe? Members are certainly free to save a tenth of their income for expenses at the Feast of Tabernacles, and many, if not most, will continue to do so. **But it is only necessary to save enough to keep the Feast. Second tithe is not commanded and not a matter of obedience or sin under the new covenant...**"

Is this so? Second tithe is not specifically re-iterated in the New Testament. Those who wish to minimise God commands to the barest minimum would have us believe nothing is commanded for us today which has not been re-iterated in the New Testament because we are "a New Testament church". Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 that **ALL** scripture is profitable for doctrine and that includes the Old Testament, not just the New Testament. Christ said in Matthew 5:18-19, "For assuredly I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whosoever therefore breaks one of the least of the commandments, and teaches men to do so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." None of the statutes, which will be followed in the World Tomorrow(Ezek.36:26), have been done away at all and we could probably say second tithe is one of those lesser commandments Christ warned us not to say teach against.

First and second tithe stand or fall together. We just saw how Paul backed up the command to give the first tithe to God's Work in Hebrews 7 so we know for sure that tithing is a command for christians today. In response to the claim that second tithe is something the church can arbitrate by "the spirit of the law" as not necessary to be kept in full today like certain administrative decisions regarding third tithe the reader will have to assess for themselves whether God would approve of minimising or paring such a command back or whether it is one of the tithes we are robbing God of(as well as ourselves) in Malachi 3:8-10.

The Festival tithe is specifically used to help us experience a foretaste of the Wonderful World Tomorrow of peace and **prosperity**. God tells us to use the second tithe for whatever our heart desires (Deut.14:26) and rejoice and enjoy a real taste of prosperity which will be like a foretaste of the World Tomorrow. God **FORBIDS** high living at the Feast at the expense of the needy (Deut.14:27). Extra second tithe over what you need should be used to help others - not for self-indulgence as this teaches us how people will use their prosperity in the World Tomorrow. How can you learn this lesson if you only save enough for yourself for the Feast? In just those two verses we can see God's wisdom and **balance** in the way He wants us to use our money. As with first tithe, if we step out on faith and follow this great law of second tithe given for our benefit to enjoy the feast, it will not be a burden to us. We just have to have faith in Him that He will provide. Again, let me re-iterate that God never commands us to do anything which will be a burden to us. He gives us laws for our blessing and well-being that we may enjoy life more to the full.

**5) THE HOLY DAYS ARE NOW VOLUNTARY, NOT COMMANDED.** In the January 5, 1995 PGR the following comments were made in relation to the Holy Days. **"The Sabbath and the Holy Days along with the other ceremonial observances of the old covenant, are fulfilled in Christ and are not binding in their physical observance in the covenant.** The new covenant, Jesus said, is in His blood. He is the reality, and the Sabbath and Holy Days are the shadows...Christ expects me as the leader of the church not to bind unnecessary burdens on the members, and our misunderstanding of the how the Sabbath should be kept by Christians has been a heavy burden that we ministers did not have to bear!

"We will continue to assemble on the Sabbath and on the Holy Days. And we will continue to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. But we will not continue to teach what we now realize the Bible teaches against - imposing old covenant observance of the Sabbath and the Holy Days as binding commandments under the new covenant. The Sabbath and the Holy days become holy time for us as we devote them to God, but they are not holy time in the sense that the old covenant is still in force. **When the people of God, who are made holy through faith in Jesus Christ, devote time to the worship of God, that becomes holy time.** It becomes holy time because it is devoted to God, who is holy, not because that particular time is itself holy. But we do not need to, and should not, judge one another with respect to the days we devoted to God (Col.2:16, Rom.14:5)...The United States requires employers to allow time off for religious observances, and the church supports its members in this. But the decision to take time from work belongs to the member...**But we will do it in the understanding that observance of the annual festivals is not a requirement for salvation...**Jesus was the whole point, the whole focus of the Law and the Prophets, and he did not come to make the shadows that pointed to Him more binding."

Twice with regards to God's Holy Days in Leviticus 23 God says, "It shall be a statute **FOREVER** in all your dwellings throughout your generations"(verses 22,41). We have proved that we(U.S.,British Commonwealth) are the descendants of those very same Israelites, as well as all of us in the church, whether physically Israel or Gentile, being a part of spiritual Israel(Rom.11). That command to be kept FOREVER is for US today. **If the Holy Days were only voluntary then there would be no reason to force and punish the Gentiles in the World Tomorrow who refuse to keep the Feast of Tabernacles(Zech.14:16-19) as opposed to watching the Jews keep the feast as their tradition!** Paul, himself, specifically commanded the Corinthians, "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven...but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." **What plainer New Testament command do you need than that to keep it?** The Holy Days are very much a part of the new covenant. They are "**the FEASTS OF THE LORD(JESUS CHRIST), HOLY CONVOCATIONS(or COMMANDED assemblies)** which you shall proclaim at their appointed times"(Lev.23:4). They are God's Feasts, not just the Jews' or Israel's feasts!

Regarding not imposing so-called old covenant feast-keeping obligations on the brethren the pastor general wrote in a recent PGR article,"Those who wish to abstain from leavened bread during that festival are free to do so, **there is no requirement to do so**. We are spiritually unleavened through faith in the sacrificed Lamb of God, and there is therefore no need to physically perform that which was only a shadow of the reality...Similarly, those who desire to fast on the Day of Atonement are free to do so, **but the church does not require members to do so**...Through his sacrificial death, Jesus Christ has already made us 'at one' with the God." We have already proven that the only Old Testament laws - laws which were terms of, but **NOT** the Old Covenant agreement was has been done away with - which are not valid today are the sacrifices(given after the Old Covenant was ratified), those civil laws which can't be applied today and those which have been specifically changed(e.g.circumcision, symbols of Passover). De-leavening our homes and fasting on the Day of Atonement do not fall into those categories. **Think about it - would God punish the Israelites who ate leaven during the Feast and did not fast on Atonement with DEATH(Exod.12:15,Lev.23:28) if He was later on going to take away the requirement to do so!**

Just as tithing has been branded by Pasadena as originating in paganism so to have the Holy Days. In a cc:Mail message to a field minister Mr Tkach Jr stated that "Even the annual festivals God gave Israel 'originated' in paganism, because the pagan nations already had fall harvest festivals, spring harvest festivals, etc. before Israel became a nation." Let's look at that idea. First of all, let's remember that God told Israel to keep the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread in Exodus 12 before the old covenant was proposed later on so the abolition of the old covenant, of itself, doesn't do away with Holy Days that pre-existed the covenant.

Notice the events pictured by the Holy Days were foreordained from the foundation of the world :-

Passover - "All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of **the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world**.(Rev.13:8)

Pentecost - "**Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love"(Eph.1:4)

Feast of Tabernacles - "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, **inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world**" (Matt.25:34).

Satan knew these things and would have inspired counterfeits as he has counterfeited everything else that God has done. God had made and foreordained the pattern and types based on the harvest cycle pictured by the Holy Days before any counterfeits of Satan were created by the pagans. The view that tithing and the Holy Days are pagan in origin is totally inconsistent with Deuteronomy 12:29-31 and brands God as a plagiarist of which I do not believe He is.

The Feasts, including the going through the physical rituals of unleavened bread and atonement, have tremendous lessons and meanings for us in the church. Some of us in the church have learned the basic meanings of each of the feasts as Mr Armstrong taught us in the Holy Days booklet he wrote and have thought that that's all there is without opening our minds to the possibility there can be many, many more lessons and layers of meanings for each of the feasts. Let's look at some of the meanings and lessons of the feasts. I am indebted to Richard Nickels for his valuable book "Biblical Holy Days" for which most of these lessons and types come from.

The Passover, of course, pictures Christ's sacrifice to cover our sins(1 Cor.11:23-26). In Ancient Israel it symbolized Israel's deliverance from the death angel as it passed over their houses at the time of the Exodus(Exod.12:26-27). Passover involved purification and preparation. Today, we are told not to take it unworthily but to examine ourselves beforehand(1 Cor.11:27-28). We are to examine ourselves - not judge others(1 Cor.11:28-31). The bread pictures 4 things - 1) the literal body of Christ which was broken for us. 2) The Word of God which is the bread of life(Matt.4:4,John 6:48) and which we need to use to grow in grace and knowledge. 3) The church - "we, being many, are one bread and one body, for we all partake of that one bread"(1 Cor.10:17). We should be thankful for the body of the church - our brethren who we called together with and have a renewed sense of dedication to serve them and be unified with them which is also pictured by the footwashing ceremony. 4) The mind of Christ and having the same love and concern that Christ showed in His time on earth.

The wine is called the cup of blessing in 1 Corinthians 10:16. It also pictures the many blessings we are to be thankful to God for in this life and the loyalty He has shown us in blessing us with all we have, including His forgiveness, reminding us of our need to show that loyalty in return to Him in heartfelt obedience. The wine pictures, most of all, Christ's shed blood which covers all those horrible past sins and giving us a fresh start, innocent of the past, though mindful we have to change our life from here on. We are told that "by His stripes we are healed"(Isa.53:5). It reminds us of the blessing of healing and the forgiveness of our breaking His physical laws which cause sickness and disease. Following on from that we should examine ourselves and how we treat our bodies and be determined to glorify God in our bodies(1 Cor.3:16-17). Christ said that He would not drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom comes(Matt.26:29). This is a type of the High Priest, which Christ now is for us, not drinking wine when he is serving in the Temple of God(Lev.10:8-11). Wine is also a symbol of the Holy Spirit(Eph.5:18).

The shed blood of our Saviour, the cup which we drink, symbolizes our sharing of His suffering(Matt.20:23) and sacrifice. We are to be living sacrifice(Rom.12:1-2) poured out like a drink offering for service and sacrifice(Phil.2:17) for God and others as Christ has done for us. As God has forgiven us through Christ we need to forgive others and even ourselves for theirs and our own faults. By symbolically ingesting Christ we focus our minds also on allowing Him to live His life in us and that takes self-discipline to submit to God's will and not live our way but through the power of God's spirit live His way. Ultimately the meaning of Christ's sacrifice to us should be to "purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God"(Heb.9:14).

The Feast of Unleavened Bread anciently symbolized the Exodus of the Israelites and their deliverance by God out of Egypt(Exod.12:17). Today it pictures for us in the church putting sin out of lives and not only that but putting on the very character of God -the fruits of the spirit(1 Cor.5:7-8). Too often all we think of is just the first part but we have to remember that it is not called the Feast of not eating Leavened Bread but the Feast of Unleavened Bread. In 1 Corinthians 5:8 it's called the unleavened bread of sincerity of truth and sincerity. Here are two specific qualities we should meditate on and build in our lives at this time. Do we really speak and live the truth and with sincerity and not hypocrisy?

The reason Israel ate unleavened bread and abstained from leaven was twofold. Firstly we are told in Deuteronomy 16:3 that they didn't have leaven because they left in haste and secondly, it was called the bread of affliction in the same verse reminding them of the bitter affliction of slavery that God had delivered them from. What are the lessons for us today? Just as Israel left in haste from Egypt which is a type of sin we have to put sin out of lives with urgency. We can't fool around with sin. If we stay in a sinful environment too long it will overtake us and enslave us. There are three lessons we can learn from the meaning of the

bread of affliction. Firstly, it pictures our trials and afflictions that we have to suffer in this life to have eternal life and reminds us that to have anything worthwhile, such as eternal life, we have to work hard for it and even suffer for it. Secondly, it pictures what Christ had to suffer for us and thirdly, the profound lesson that we have to believe not just in our minds but deep in our hearts as well, which manifests itself in our choices we make and the way we want to go, and that is, that sin hurts!

There are lessons that we learn from de-leavening our homes and the rituals of abstaining from leaven and eating unleavened bread. Do we think about them as we go through them? Obviously de-leavening our homes shows we have to thoroughly put sin out in every nook and cranny we can get to. It teaches us that God's way of life is not a smorgasbord. We can't pick and choose. We can ask ourselves, "What areas am I still holding back from God?" Sometimes it's hard to tell whether certain things contain leaven or not. This can teach us the lesson of avoiding the grey areas. Sometimes we accidentally eat something leavened. This shows us how easy it is to sin and how much we need God's help to avoid sin. Sometimes we find leaven during the feast we missed when de-leavening just like we find hidden sins in our life which have to be put away immediately. We have to eat unleavened bread every day - seven days shall you eat it. This teaches us our need to come to God seeking His help and power every day and be renewed day by day(2 Cor.4:16). Seven is the number of completeness teaching us that we need to put sin out of our lives completely.

A little leaven leavens the whole lump(1 Cor.5:6-8) Paul tells us. If we let Satan and sin to get a foot in the door they will push open the whole door. That's why we cannot afford to compromise even a little. We are also told to beware of the spiritual leaven of false teachers(Matt.16:6-12). During the Feast the Israelites commemorated the wavesheaf offering. The Sabbath before is the memorial of the resurrection of Jesus Christ who rose near the end of the Sabbath and rose to heaven and was accepted as the true wavesheaf offering - the first of the firstfruits - on the day after. On that weekly Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread we should take time to remember the resurrection of Christ which occurred on that day and all it symbolizes.

Pentecost was a celebration and thanksgiving for the first small harvest for Israel. In the plan of God we, in the church, are the first small harvest of souls of all humanity. Pentecost was the birthday of the church(Acts 2) when the Holy Spirit was given. We focus on how much we need God's spirit and what it does for us as the earnest or deposit of eternal life(Eph.1:14). Israel is called His firstfruits in Jeremiah 2:3 and it is also a time to think of how God is going to use the physical nation of Israel first as the model nation of the World Tomorrow to teach the rest of the world God's ways(Zech.8:23). It is also a reminder of the giving of the Law which traditionally is believed to have occurred on the day of Pentecost. The Jews traditionally read the book of Ruth on this day, a book that is a type of the future marriage of the church and Christ. It is time to think of how we can contribute to

unity in the church and be of one accord(Acts 2:1) just like the church was at Pentecost and how we can each support the church and it's Work of reaching the world with the good news of salvation and the World Tomorrow. Just as the apostles had to tarry or wait for the day it teaches us that we have to wait on God to help us and deliver us from the trials of sin and the world.

The Feast of Trumpets pictures the Day of the Lord and the return of Christ - the most momentous event of all time to happen. It is the Feast of Trumpets - plural - picturing the whole of the Day of the Lord and how God is going to spank this world and bring this world to repentance. The trumpet is a symbol of war(Jer.4:19) and a symbol of warning reminding us of our job to warn this world of the impending tribulation(Amos 3:6, Isa.58:1). Trumpets were also blown as a sound of peace or end of strife(2 Sam.2:28). When Christ comes back there will finally be peace on earth and not only that an end to strife and struggle in our lives against sin when we will be resurrected to immortality(1 Cor.15:51-54). Trumpets were also blown signifying the crowning of a king(1 Kings 1:34). This day pictures the crowning of Christ as king over all the earth(Rev.11:15). Israel will also be re-gathered at the sound of the trumpet(Isa.27:12-13). The message of the Feast of Trumpets is that we should repent and rend our hearts to God(Joel 2:1-13). We should on this day reflect on all that this world is going through and what it will go through and sigh and cry over all these terrible things our world is bringing upon itself(Ezek.9:4). According to Jewish tradition the re-creation of the earth culminating with Adam also occurred on this day. The day reminds us of man's utter hopelessness to live in peace and harmony without God and our utter need of Christ's intervention in world affairs.

The Day of Atonement pictures the putting away of Satan and being made at one with God through the atoning sacrifice of Christ. The High Priest we read in Leviticus 16 had to cast lots to decide which goat would represent Christ and which would represent Satan. This teaches us that we need God's help to tell what is of God and what is of the devil in our lives. The high priest killed one goat which represented Christ. Sin separates us from God so that is why we need an atonement(Isa.59:2). The high priest entering the Holy of holies with the blood of the goat offering represents the risen Messiah entering God's tabernacle beseeching God to apply His precious blood for our sins. The sins were symbolically laid upon the Azazel goat's head picturing Satan. The goat was then driven by a fit man representing the angel binding Satan in the bottomless pit(Rev.20:1-2) after Christ returns. It pictures the wonderful time when all mankind will be atoned to God when Satan will be bound. It's a day that reminds us of God's mercy which is always available upon genuine repentance though we cannot use mercy as an excuse to break God's law(Heb.10:26-31).

The Jubilee Year began on the Day of Atonement(Lev.25:8-17). The Jubilee is a year of freedom - freedom from debts and a return to one's inheritance - a fresh start. Atonement pictures our freedom from sin. The day also reminds us of the incredible gap between man and God and that we need Christ to bridge that



gap, who was both man and God. Fasting pictures drawing close to God as we seek to put away those sins that distance us from God. Atonement drives home that sin is a real offence to God, God is merciful to pardon our sins and that we have to do something to receive the gift of pardoning - rending our heart with fasting.

The Feast of Tabernacles pictures the greater harvest picturing the millennium(Isa.25:6-8) when Christ will set His hand to save all of mankind. The reason it is called the Feast of Tabernacles is that it is also a reminder of when Israel dwelt in booths or tabernacles in the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land(Lev.23:42-43). It pictures also for us the bodies that we have now as we look forward to the spiritual bodies we will have in the World Tomorrow(2 Cor.5:1-4). It reminds us of the stark contrast between us and God and our ultimate destiny. Just as Abraham dwelt in tabernacles and looked forward to the heavenly Jerusalem(Heb.11:9) we look forward to that city and the Kingdom of God. We have a seven day feast which is a type of the seven day wedding feasts of ancient Israel when there will be great joy after the marriage of Christ and the church when together we will bring joy to this world and many more sons and daughters will be brought to glory(Heb.2:10). According to the Apocryphal book of Jubilees Abraham kept the Feast of Tabernacles. "And Abraham built Succoth for himself and his servants in the seventh month and he was the first to celebrate the festival of Succoth in the Holy Land"(Jubilees 16:26).

Will God dwell with men? Ever since Christ tabernacled with Israel and tabernacled with mankind(John 1:14) when he became flesh He always has desired to. The Father can hardly wait until He can tabernacle and live with man for all time(Rev.21,22) when the heavenly Jerusalem will come to earth. The Father has remained separate from mankind for all this time and after the millennium and Great White Throne Judgment the earth will be cleansed by fire. The great meaning behind this is to teach mankind that God cannot live with sin and that it is utterly repugnant to Him. Living in tabernacles is a type of being under God's protection in time of trouble and eventually living in God's house - His temple. Finally, two big lessons of the Feast we are told in the Book of Deuteronomy are that we learn to fear God always(Deut.14:22-27) and to rejoice in the wonderful world tomorrow(Deut.16:13-15).

The Last Great Day pictures the Great White Throne Judgment which we read of in Ezekiel 37 and Revelation 20 when all the unsaved dead will be resurrected to be given their first real chance at salvation. Christ spoke of this day when rivers of living water will flow to all humanity as all of mankind will receive God's spirit(John 7:37-39) and be judged over the 100 year period according to their works. There is an interesting parallel between the first 3 and the last 3 feasts. Passover and Atonement both focus on the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ and coming as close to God as possible. We fast before Passover so we can take it worthily just as we fast before atonement. The two seven-day festivals of Unleavened Bread and Tabernacles both picture our life of tabernacling in this

life and focus our attention on the gap between us and God and what we have to do to bridge that gap with God's help - put sin out of our lives and learn to fear God always. And finally Pentecost and The Last Great Day picture the two great harvests of souls - the church now and then the rest of the world when God's spirit is poured out to all mankind (Acts 2:17). The Holy Days are so rich in meaning and teach us so many things about God's plan. It's absolutely tragic when liberal men want to water down these fantastic days.

**6) EATING UNCLEAN FOOD NO LONGER SINFUL.** The church now teaches that the deliberate eating of unclean foods as outlined in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 is now longer a spiritual sin. In the January 5, 1995 PGR the following was said, "Is it a sin to eat unclean meat?...For Israel, it was something that helped them remember that they were sanctified and set apart as God's people...Christians, however, are made clean before God through faith in Jesus Christ, the one to whom such laws pointed. Read what Mark said in Mark 7:18-19: 'Are you so dull, He asked, Don't you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him unclean? For it does not go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body.' **(In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.)** **Voluntarily** abstaining from unclean meat, when not used as a spiritual yardstick, can help us remember that we are made spiritually clean through faith in Jesus Christ and that we are called out of the world to serve Him. **But there is no scriptural requirement for Christians to abstain from unclean meat.**"

Chapter 33 of The Bible Story written by Basil Wolverton on the Laws of Health and Mr Leroy Neff's article entitled "Did Peter Eat Pork?" (Good News, February 1986) are excellent to review to see through this new (or I should say old) Protestant teaching that Pasadena is now trying to push through. **If these laws were given just as a ritual for Israel to remind them that they were set apart by God for a holy purpose and Christ through faith now makes that unnecessary then why was the knowledge about what animals were clean and unclean made known to the patriarchs centuries before they were given at Mt Sinai when the old covenant was made? We read in Genesis 7:2-3 that Noah was told to bring seven pairs of each clean animal and one pair of each unclean animal onto the ark.**

When God commanded Israel not to eat unclean foods the only two logical reasons there could be for it are either it was a ceremonial thing to remind them of their being set apart by God as claimed now or that it was a direct command for our health and well-being not to be broken. We are told in Leviticus 11:46-47 that, "This is the law...to distinguish between the unclean and the clean, and between the animal that may be eaten and the animal that may not be eaten." The clear implication is that God, who made all the creatures, had a purpose for each of those creatures and being their designer and the designer of our bodies knows what foods were fit for human consumption and what foods are not. Medical evidence, which we have documented quite thoroughly in the past in "The

Principles of Healthful Living" booklet and other sources have shown that this clearly appears to be the case. For example, a pig digests its food in about 3 1/2 hours whereas a cow requires 24 hours to do the same thing through digestive processes screening out impurities that would otherwise pass into its flesh and milk. This is one of dozens of amazing differences documented by those who have studied clean and unclean foods that have verified the wisdom of the prohibitions God gave in Leviticus 11. **If unclean foods are clearly unhealthy as God commanded would He suddenly lift the prohibition and allow them to be eaten just because Christ now makes us spiritually clean and set apart? Of course not!**

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica(11th edition,Vol.19,p.319) the Nazarenes or the remnants of the early apostolic church which fled to Pella prior to the destruction of the Temple adhered "as far as possible to the Mosaic economy as regards...sabbaths, **foods**(clean and unclean meats) and the like". The Waldenses of the Middle Ages held "**a notion that the observance of the Law of Moses in everything except the offering of sacrifices was obligatory upon Christians**"(Lutheran historian, Mosheim). As stated before deliberately eating unhealthily is like taking an instalment plan for self-murder which is a spiritual matter - therefore it is a sin.

Mark 7:18-19 is used to say that there all meats are purged by the body and therefore meat of unclean animals is no longer unclean. As if the human body can nullify the health risks of unclean foods so clearly documented by the experts! This is not what Christ was talking about. He didn't go through the Pharisaical(not God-ordained) ritual of washing His arms from elbow to hands before He ate and the Pharisees criticised Him for it. Christ was talking about what defiles a man that comes out of his heart - spiritual sins and lusts or spiritual defilement. If He ingested any minute bits of dirt with His food it would be eliminated by the body but physical dirt cannot defile a man's thoughts and lead him to lust and other sins.

Several years after the resurrection Peter stated that he had "never eaten anything that is uncommon or unclean" in Acts 10:14. The apostles still continued to abstain from unclean foods and called those foods unclean. If it they were for ceremonial distinction purposes only why still label them at that time years after the everything was nailed to the cross as unclean?

For a thorough explanation of that verse and other difficult passages such as 2 Timothy 4:4, Acts 15:28-29, 1 Corinthians 10:25-29, Romans 14:1-14 and others please review the above quoted literature which as I said are excellent to review the topic. God never commands anything that isn't for our ultimate good and well-being and that's why He has given us the laws about clean and unclean animals. We will be blessed by God in our health if we humbly obey those laws of God without trying to get out of their obedience and make exceptions for ourselves by saying it's only voluntary but not commanded.

In conclusion the story of the old and new covenants in a fantastic overview of the whole of the plan of God for all mankind. God's commandments, such as the Sabbath, and His statutes such as Holy Days, tithing and clean and unclean foods are still binding on christians today. The fault with the old covenant was not with the laws but with the people and in the new covenant God is now making with spiritual Israel His laws are being written on our hearts.