

WHY THE FEASTS ARE SO IMPORTANT

We need to explain why the feasts, as listed in Leviticus chapter 23, are so important. First, we will give a brief overview and then go into further explanation on each point. The feasts teach a correct, balanced, and in-depth view of the gospel, the sanctuary, righteousness by faith, and the three angels' messages. Each feast teaches a different aspect of each these subjects. The feasts also teach many more details about the prophecies in Daniel and Revelation. When you observe each feast, it gives you the opportunity and the time to investigate and study further into the meaning of that feast. Each year as you observe the feasts, you will study deeper and learn even more. This knowledge that you will acquire will deepen your relationship with God considerably. In short, the observance of the feasts will revitalize and deepen your knowledge of the Bible and your relationship with God. Over and over, when new feast keepers call us up, they are so excited about what they are learning and they exclaim, "The Bible is an entire new book to me. My relationship with God has deepened considerably. I am so thankful to have discovered this truth!" And indeed, we agree, for that is our testimony as well. In fact, just yesterday, we received the following statement in an email from a new feast keeper. "I can't learn enough, fast enough about God's feast days! How beautiful they are; how deep and full of meaning! How much I've missed out on all these years, not knowing or keeping the feasts! They are the complete opposite of legalism - they are joyful!" If you want to revitalize your spiritual life, the study and observance of the feasts will definitely do it.

Our number one reason for observing the feasts is because Jesus observed them and in 1 Peter 2:21 it says, "For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps." The Bible doesn't say, "Follow Jesus' footsteps in everything except for the observance of the feasts." Rather, the Bible says to follow Jesus' footsteps in everything. Since Jesus observed the feasts, this means we should also observe the feasts. One SDA Pastor who challenged our belief in the feasts used to be an evangelist. We asked this pastor, "When you preached as an evangelist, did you ever say to your congregation, 'Jesus observed the Seventh-day Sabbath. The Bible says to follow Jesus' example in all things, therefore, you should observe the Seventh-day Sabbath.'" This evangelist pastor replied, "I said that all the time!" We replied, "Well then, that's why we observe the feasts. Jesus observed the feasts and the Bible says we should follow Jesus' example in all things." This pastor remained silent for he had no answer as he knew that we were right—Jesus did observe the feasts. Those who challenge the observance of the feasts do not address our number one reason for observing the feasts. We can only imagine why. There is no answer. The Bible is very clear. We are to follow in Jesus' footsteps in everything. Some who are against the observance of the feasts call feast-keepers "anti-Christ" for observing the feasts. How can we possibly be anti-Christ for doing what Jesus Himself did and following in His footsteps? And if it's anti-Christ to keep the feasts, then, the logical end conclusion of such a statement is that Jesus Himself was anti-Christ (against Himself) for observing the feasts! Think it over carefully. In the Judgment Day, Jesus will be our Judge. Are you safer in the Judgment for having followed in Jesus' footsteps in everything, or for not following in His footsteps in everything? Do you really think Jesus would say, "By the way, I'm going to have to keep you out of the kingdom for feast keeping. Yes, I know it was following in My footsteps, and I know that I never said in My Word that the feasts were abolished, but, nevertheless, you should have followed your church leaders instead of following My Example and My Word." We don't think so! You are definitely safer in the Judgment for having followed in Jesus' footsteps than if you haven't. You are also safer following the Bereans' example of testing everything church leaders tell you by the Bible to make sure these church leaders are following the Bible. See Acts 17:11.

Here are some of the Bible texts and Ellen White quotes that show that Jesus observed the feasts. Luke 2:41, 42; Matthew 26:17-18; John 2:23; John 4:45; John 5:1; John 7:10, 14, 37; Luke 22:15-16.

“Among the Jews the twelfth year was the dividing line between childhood and youth. On completing this year a Hebrew boy was called a son of the law, and also a son of God. He was given special opportunities for religious instruction, and **was expected to participate in the sacred feasts and observances. It was in accordance with this custom that Jesus in His boyhood made the Passover visit to Jerusalem.**” (*Desire of Ages*, p. 75) Notice that Jesus was expected to participate in the feasts starting at age twelve and so He did. Jesus was definitely at the age of accountability and knew what He was doing. In fact, it was at this Passover at age twelve when Jesus reasoned with the most learned men in the nation concerning the truths in the Scriptures.

“Jesus presented Himself as one thirsting for a knowledge of God. His questions were suggestive of deep truths which had long been obscured, yet which were vital to the salvation of souls. While showing how narrow and superficial was the wisdom of the wise men, every question put before them a divine lesson, and placed truth in a new aspect. The rabbis spoke of the wonderful elevation which the Messiah's coming would bring to the Jewish nation; but Jesus presented the prophecy of Isaiah, and asked them the meaning of those scriptures that point to the suffering and death of the Lamb of God. The doctors turned upon Him with questions, and they were amazed at His answers. With the humility of a child He repeated the words of Scripture, giving them a depth of meaning that the wise men had not conceived of. If followed, the lines of truth He pointed out would have worked a reformation in the religion of the day. A deep interest in spiritual things would have been awakened; and when Jesus began His ministry, many would have been prepared to receive Him.” (*Desire of Ages*, p. 78)

Yes, at age twelve Jesus already knew the Scriptures better than the rabbis. He was also observing the feasts. Why? Because He knew that the Bible commanded feast observance and He followed all of God's commands. He also knew that He was to be our Example in all things.

Jesus also never observed the ceremonial law. **“Christ passed through all the experiences of His childhood, youth, and manhood without the observance of ceremonial temple worship.”** (*The Bible Echo*, October 31, 1898) The implications of this quote are huge. Jesus kept the feasts, but He did not observe the ceremonial law, even in His childhood. This means that the feasts cannot be part of the ceremonial law, as our church leaders tell us. The word “ceremonial” is not in the Bible; it is a word of man's invention. We looked up every quote of Ellen White's in which she used the word “ceremonial” to see how she defined this word and she defines it as the sacrificial system. She never includes the feasts as being part of the ceremonial law. She also never uses the term “ceremonial Sabbaths.” “Ceremonial sabbaths” are not found in either the Bible or Ellen White's writings as it is an oxymoron. A day cannot be “ceremonial” as a day is simply time and a ceremony is something that is done. Yes, you can do ceremonies on a day, but a day cannot be a ceremony. If what one does on a day makes the day “ceremonial” then the Seventh-day Sabbath is also “ceremonial” because under the ceremonial law, lambs were sacrificed on the Seventh-day Sabbath (Numbers 28:9). We do agree that according to Daniel 9:27 the sacrificial system, which is the ceremonial system, ended at the cross. The church was able to separate the ceremonial system (sacrificial system) from the Seventh-day Sabbath and realize that when the sacrificial system ended at the cross, the observance of the Seventh-day Sabbath continued on, but they seem to have difficulty doing the same for the yearly Sabbaths. If the yearly Sabbaths are ceremonial because sacrifices were done on them, then the weekly Seventh-day Sabbath is also ceremonial because sacrifices were done on it. One simply cannot argue both ways and be logical. God is a God of logic, order, and reason and He appeals to our logic (Isaiah 1:18).

Another reason why we observe the feasts is that the feasts teach the entire gospel. The feasts also explain the sanctuary since each part of the sanctuary also teaches a part of the gospel. The steps of salvation in the gospel are: justification, sanctification, purification, and glorification. Any gospel that eliminates out any of these steps or that emphasizes one step over the others, teaches a false balance of the gospel. In a nutshell, here is how the feasts further explain both the gospel and the sanctuary.

Passover teaches justification. When one entered the courtyard of the sanctuary, the first thing one saw was the altar of burnt offering. Before the cross, when a person sinned, they had to confess their sins over a lamb here at this altar, then slay the lamb, and offer it as a sacrifice on this altar. Now, after the cross, the first step to becoming a Christian is to accept Jesus the Passover Lamb into our lives and confess our sins. Jesus then freely pardons our sins. See 1 John 1:9. This step is justification, which is righteousness on the credit card principle. At this point Jesus covers our lives with His blood and counts us as if we are righteous, even though we have not actually become perfected yet. Should we die, as did the thief on the cross (See Luke 23:39-43), we are saved. This is the wonderful good news of the gospel! This is the message of Passover and it gives us great hope. Our part is to ask for forgiveness and God's part is to forgive those who ask.

After passing the altar of burnt offering in the courtyard of the sanctuary, one came to the laver where the priests had to wash before entering the sanctuary. This laver represents baptism. As soon as we come to Jesus, we need to be baptized.

The very next day after Passover was the Feast of Unleavened Bread which lasted one week. During this week the leaven was to be removed from the home and not eaten. In the Bible leaven represents sin. The message of this feast is that we are to remove sin from our lives which is sanctification. Justification forgives us of our sin but the message of sanctification is that we are to stop the practice of sin. With God's help we are to remove sin out of our lives just like the leaven was removed out of the house. God gives us strength to remove sin out of our lives as we spend time with Him in Bible study and prayer. After passing the laver in the courtyard of the sanctuary, one came to the entrance of the sanctuary. The first apartment of the sanctuary, the Holy Place, had three articles of furniture in it: the table of shewbread, the altar of incense, and the seven-branched golden candlestick. The bread on the table of showbread represents Jesus, the Bread of Life as well as His Word, the Bible. The incense rising from the altar of incense represents our prayers ascending to God, and the candlestick represents Jesus, the Light of the world. The oil in the candlestick represents the Holy Spirit. This is the part of the sanctuary that represents sanctification. As we spend time with Jesus through Bible study and prayer, the Holy Spirit gives us strength to put sin out of our lives. This is the message of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. We are to be growing daily and yes, this growth is the work of a lifetime, so we should not be discouraged when we fail. We simply get back up, ask Jesus to forgive us, and carry on with the work of sanctification in our lives.

We heard the following story from a preacher. He told how he loved rock climbing. One day he attempted a difficult climb in which there was a slight overhang of the rock at the top. He said that in the rock there were hand and foot holds he could hang on to, to prevent falling. He also had a safety rope to save him if he did fall. He said that having the safety rope took away his fear and because of a lack of fear, he was able to climb to the very top without falling to his death. However, if he had not had the safety rope, he would have been so fearful of falling that he would most surely have fallen to his death due to sweaty palms and not being able to get a good grip on the rock. This story illustrates justification and sanctification. The rope represents grace and it is by God's grace and the blood of Jesus that we are justified. Climbing the rock represents sanctification. If he should have fallen, the rope of grace would have caught him and saved him. Because of that rope, he had no fear of falling (being lost) and so he was able to put all his concentration into climbing (growing in the ability to keep God's Law). In the same way, because of God's grace in justifying us, we have the joy of salvation, which removes fear (1 John 4:18), and therefore can concentrate on growing in our ability to keep God's Law. Notice that we kept the Law because we are already saved through Justification. We don't keep the Law to be saved. But we must be in the process of growing in our ability to keep the Law if we want to have the gift of perfection granted to us (See Hebrews 10:14). However, because our lives are covered by Jesus' blood through the gift of Justification, if at any time we die during the process of Sanctification, even if we have had only a short time to participate in Sanctification, we will be saved, as was the thief on the cross (Luke 23:39-43). That's the wonderful good news of the gospel!

During the Feast of Unleavened Bread was the day of Firstfruits. Firstfruits represents the Firstfruits of those who are saved and it also represents the resurrection. See 1 Corinthians 15:23. Firstfruits also represents giving God the first and best of everything in our lives: our time, our talents, and our money. See Numbers 18:12 and Leviticus 23:10.

The next feast is Pentecost, which came fifty days after Firstfruits. The fifty days represents a mini-Jubilee. A regular Jubilee consisted of fifty years. See Leviticus 25:8-22. At the Jubilee any land that had been sold was returned to the original owner, all debts were forgiven, and the slaves were released. This represents the fact that Jesus forgives all our debts of sin, releases us from the slavery of sin, and, at the end of the Millennium, will restore our land, this earth, to His people, the original rightful owners. See Isaiah 61:1-2 and Revelation 21:1-4. Pentecost represents the Holy Spirit coming into our lives through the early and latter rains of the Spirit, enabling us to grow in Sanctification so we are ready to be perfected. See Acts 2:1-4, Acts 3:19, Isaiah 44:3, Joel 2:23, Psalms 72:6, Hosea 6:3, Deuteronomy 11:14, Jeremiah 3:2-3, and Deuteronomy 32:2. "As we seek God for the Holy Spirit, it will work in us meekness, humbleness of mind, a conscious dependence upon God for the **perfecting latter rain**. If we pray for the blessing in faith, we shall receive it as God has promised." (*Testimonies to Ministers* p. 508) The oil in the candlestick in the Holy Place represented the Holy Spirit. The burning oil gave light, so the Holy Spirit in our lives will produce God's light in our lives enabling us to be a witness to the world.

The next feast was the Feast of Trumpets. On this feast the trumpets were sounded to remind everyone that only ten days remained until Judgment Day, the Day of Atonement. This represents God's last call to a dying world to repent. In Revelation chapters 8 and 9, the sounding of the seven trumpets is the fulfillment of the Feast of Trumpets. These trumpets sound in order to warn the world that the seven last plagues are coming and all those who don't repent will be lost for eternity and will have these plagues fall on them. (These plagues are justified because they fall on the wicked who have terribly persecuted and killed many of God's children.) These trumpets are judgments of mercy in order to wake up a world to get them to repent so they don't have the plagues fall on them. The fact that it takes judgments as severe as the seven trumpets shows how hardened the world is; yet they show God's great mercy in that He is willing to go to any length in order to wake this world up to their danger so they will repent and be saved. Notice that these seven trumpets are sounded at the altar of incense, located within the Holy Place of the sanctuary. See Revelation 8:2-6. Each year when we celebrate the Feast of Trumpets, we remember that the ten days until the Day of Atonement represents one day for each of the Ten Commandments. During this time we review our lives to make sure we are following the Ten Commandments and that all sins are confessed. The Bible tells us that periodically we are to "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith." (2 Corinthians 13:5) The ten days between Trumpets and the Day of Atonement is a good time to do this.

The next feast is the Day of Atonement. The wonderful message of the Day of Atonement is that all those who have been growing in sanctification will have their characters perfected by God when they are judged. (Leviticus 16:30, Hebrews 10:14) What a message of hope! "Man may grow up into Christ, his living head. It is not the work of a moment, but that of a lifetime. By growing daily in the divine life, he will not attain to the full stature of a perfect man in Christ until his probation ceases." (*Testimonies*, Vol. 4, p. 367) Notice that this quote says that growing in Jesus (sanctification) is the work of a lifetime, but that when our probation closes (either when we died or when we are judged) is when we reach perfection. This is when our minds are perfected, because our minds contain our characters. This is also when we are sealed. This is the message of Zechariah chapter 3. It's also the message of Matthew 22:1-14. (For much more on this see our book *God's Holidays*.) Those who are sealed and perfected will be saved. The part of the sanctuary that represents this feast was the Most Holy Place which contained the ark of the covenant with the Law of God in it. The ark was covered with the mercy seat and the cherubim stood above the ark. This ark represents God's throne. The law being covered with the mercy seat represents God's mercy being extended to those who break His law if they repent. This Most Holy Place was entered only once a year by the High Priest, on the Day of Atonement; thus, the Most Holy Place represents our judgment, sealing, and perfecting.

The last feast of the year was the Feast of Tabernacles. The message of this feast is that God will dwell with those who are saved. The word “tabernacle” means “dwelling place” meaning that God will dwell with us. Jesus was born on the Feast of Tabernacles, the Second Coming will occur on the Feast of Tabernacles, and the New Jerusalem will come down from heaven to this earth on the Feast of Tabernacles. (For proof of this see our book, *God's Holidays*.) When we celebrate this feast we can rejoice, because we have participated in justification, sanctification, and purification, and are now ready for glorification. Our bodies will be perfected at the Second Coming, we will receive immortality, and we will be glorified. See 1 Corinthians 15:51-55. The part of the sanctuary that represents glorification is the white wall surrounding the courtyard of the sanctuary. White represents complete perfection.

Righteousness by faith occurs for us as we participate in these four steps to salvation: justification, sanctification, purification, and glorification. The first two steps involve things that we can do; but the last two steps are totally done by God for those who participate in the first two steps of salvation. This is the message of the three angels in Revelation 14:6-16. The first angel's message represents the part of the gospel that we have a part in, which is justification and sanctification. This message gets God's people ready to receive the second angel's message which is the announcement of the Judgment, which happens on the Day of Atonement and is when God's people are perfected. The third angel's message pronounces the punishment on those who do not receive the gospel represented by the first two angels. Verses 14-16 in this chapter represent the Second Coming, or glorification of God's people. Thus righteousness by faith, the three angels' messages, the sanctuary message, and the feasts are all teaching the same message, which is the gospel or the four steps to salvation.

Now for the punch line. Leviticus 23:4 says, “These are the feasts of the LORD, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons.” The word “convocations” means “assembly” and “rehearsal.” In other words, as we assemble with God's people on the feast days as we are commanded, we are rehearsing the entire gospel from start to finish every single year. For a play to be brought to performance, the actors must do a lot of rehearsing. In this drama between God and Satan the earth is the stage and we are the actors. It's like God is saying, “If you want to be ready for what is coming, you must rehearse, and I am giving you the opportunity to rehearse the entire plan of salvation, every single year, through the observance of the feasts.”

This thought leads us to a related reason, and in fact one of our biggest reasons for observing the feasts. The feasts are simply a gift from God to spend extra time with Him, developing our relationship with Him as we rehearse the entire gospel from year to year. Hebrews 10:25 says, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” In other words, God is saying that as we see the Second Coming approaching, spending time with God is even more important. That's what the feasts are all about—spending time with God. God knew that as evil intensified in this world that we would need more than one day a week to spend with Him; we also need an entire week of intensive time with Him each spring and each fall. Since God exhorts us to spend more time with Him as we approach the Second Coming, not less, does it make any sense at all that God would abolish time spent with Him? To us it doesn't make any sense at all.

In Matthew 22:1-14 and in Matthew 25:1-13, God teaches us more about salvation through the parable of the wedding feast. According to Jewish customs, when a young man proposed to a young lady, he would present to her a Ketubah. A Ketubah was simply his entire way of life, his likes and dislikes, and his rules of living, written down. She would read the Ketubah and if she decided to accept his proposal of marriage, she would drink from a cup of grape juice to signify that she accepted. They were then engaged to be married and the young man would go back to his father's home and begin building a home for his wife. She would go back to her parents' home and study the Ketubah and practice it so that when the time for the wedding arrived, she would be ready to follow her husband's wishes for their new life together. She did not know when her husband would come and get her for the wedding and so she had to be ready all the time. When the home was sufficiently built, then it was the duty of the father of the groom to announce that it was time for the wedding. Then it was that the wedding party would go to get the bride and the wedding

would commence. This is a beautiful parable of our salvation. The Ketubah is our Bible, we are the Bride, Jesus is the Groom, and God is the Heavenly Father. We have been engaged to Jesus. He has gone to heaven to prepare our home for us. (John 14:1-3) Meanwhile, we are to study our Ketubah, the Bible, and practice it diligently, so that when the time comes and Jesus comes to claim us as His Bride, we are ready. When the Father determines that the house is ready for the Bride, then He announces the day and the hour of the wedding. (Mark 13:32) Concerning this verse in Mark 13:32, “An old English version of the passage reads, ‘But that day and hour no man maketh known, neither the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.’ This is the correct reading according to several of the ablest critics of the same age.” (*Word to the Little Flock*, p. 5) So it is our Heavenly Father who will announce the time of the Wedding, which is the Second Coming. These parables show that our duty now, as the Bride, is to diligently study His Word and rehearse it. We should be doing this on a daily basis, but the feasts give us that opportunity to spend intensive time with Him, learning and rehearsing His Word.

We could literally write a book about the deep spiritual meanings of the feasts, but we just wanted to give you an overview of the feasts so you can begin to see the wonderful spiritual lessons contained in the feasts in the hope that this will encourage you to celebrate the feasts from year to year and as you do so to study deeply for yourself into their meaning and thus grow in your knowledge of salvation. Growing in knowledge will also cause you to grow in your love for God as you learn to what great lengths He has gone to save you.

One last thought on this subject. If the church had been observing the feasts they would have been saved from a multitude of evils. For instance, when we were growing up in this church, the church was deep into legalism. The church was emphasizing Sanctification to the almost exclusion of Justification. Yes, Sanctification does emphasize growing in one’s ability to keep the Law. This is what we heard all the time. We remember it well, beginning as young as kindergarten at church, where we were told, “If you want to be saved, you have to be good.” We weren’t told the wonderful good news of Justification; we were just told we had better be good (keep the Law perfectly) or we would be lost. Naturally, at our tender young ages, this caused us a lot of anxiety. How sad to put that kind of a burden on young people! As a result, the majority of our generation got weary of this message as they figured they would never be “good enough” and they left the church. We ourselves barely hung in there with this heavy burden nearly crushing us but thank goodness we did, until we found, as adults, the wonderful good news of the rest of the gospel that we just outlined for you in this chapter.

One text that caused us to hang in there as teenagers was Jeremiah 29:13, “And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart.” We were encouraged that if we just hung in there eventually we would find Him, attain peace, and be saved. We finally did that as adults, but we spent our entire childhood in a state of anxiety over our salvation.

If only the church had been observing the feasts from year to year and deeply studying into the meaning of the feasts, they would never have fallen off into legalism. Why? Passover (representing Justification) and Unleavened Bread (representing Sanctification) are two feasts that are back-to-back as Passover is immediately followed by Unleavened Bread for a total of eight days in a row. Because they are back-to-back they are like two sides of one coin. Without one side of a coin you don’t have the other side. Justification (Passover) without Sanctification (Unleavened Bread) is cheap grace. Sanctification without Justification is legalism. Without each other you have a false balance and a false gospel.

Sad to say, the church, due to being weary of the burden of legalism, has fallen off the road to the other side and are now into cheap grace, or Justification without Sanctification. Because Sanctification does involve keeping the law, now it is implied in the church, “Keeping the law is legalism.” Many times the church stops one step short of saying it, but we know that’s what they mean. Because the Law is being tossed out, many strange things have entered our beloved church and many standards

have been dropped. We are in a severe state of apostasy as a result. Jesus said, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." (John 14:15) If we don't keep the commandments we don't truly love God. We heard one preacher put it this way. "The Law is loving instruction from a Father to His sons. We don't have to keep the Law—we get to!" The Law is a hedge of protection about us, keeping us safe from many evils, and helping us to live a happy life. The commandments are the way to happiness. For instance, how happy is a murderer who is sitting on death row? Committing that murder led to a loss of the murderer's happiness and liberty. Cheap grace gives people a false sense of security and if they don't throw off this false security, they will find, too late, that they are lost. Observing the feasts from year to year while studying deeply into the meaning of the feasts, would have prevented the church from falling off to one side and then the other. It would have prevented us from being raised under a heavy burden when we were growing up; in short, it would have saved the church and many church members from a lot of grief and a lot of evil. So many people are going to be lost as a result of the church falling off into a false balance! All of this could have been prevented if only the church were following what the Bible says to do, and observing the feasts.

This leads us to our next point. The Bible never abolishes the feasts. Never. You can search the entire Bible from start to finish and you will not find one text that says that the feasts have been abolished. Not only does the Bible not abolish the feasts, you can find the feasts in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. The Bible does tell us plainly what was abolished at the cross, which was the sacrificial system. See Daniel 9:27. In ancient Israel, a Jew's entire year revolved around the feasts. It was a major part of their life. In fact, by the time they traveled by foot or on donkey to get to the feasts, celebrated the feasts, and then traveled back home, they would have spent about a month of their time. This was a month in the spring and a month in the fall—two months of their year devoted to the feasts! Their planting and harvesting of their crops also revolved around the feasts. Throughout the year they were instructed to save up their money so they could afford to attend the feasts. As a result, feast-keeping was deeply ingrained into them. With that in mind, don't you think it would be cruel of God to abolish the feasts and not tell His people? God is not that kind of a God!

Some who are against the feasts try to show that the early Christians didn't realize the feasts had been abolished until many years after the cross and this is why the early Christians and the apostle Paul observed the feasts. God is not that kind of a God to leave His people in darkness concerning His will! He tells us plainly in His Word what He expects of us. Furthermore, God gives a severe warning if we add to His Word or delete things from His Word without His permission. "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." (Deuteronomy 4:2) "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." (Revelation 22:18-19) Expounding upon the story in 1 Kings 13:11-34, Ellen White writes, "**When the Lord gives a man a command such as He gave this messenger, He Himself must countermand the order.** Upon those who turn from the voice of God to listen to counter orders, the threatened evil will come." (*Manuscript 1*, 1912) What these texts and this quote is saying is that it is a salvational issue to say that something has been abolished out of God's Word unless God Himself tells us that this was abolished. Ellen White stresses that we must follow His Word until He Himself abolished His Word. Since God never says the feasts were abolished, it is a very serious matter to say that they were. However, for those who say that Paul didn't realize until later in his ministry that the feasts were abolished, the following quotes show that Paul still observed the feasts up until the time he was taken as captive, at the end of his ministry. Here is Ellen White's comments on Acts 20:6 which says, "And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread." "At Philippi Paul tarried to keep the Passover. Only

Luke remained with him, the other members of the company passing on to Troas to await him there. The Philippians were the most loving and truehearted of the apostle's converts, and during the eight days of the feast he enjoyed peaceful and happy communion with them." (*Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 390-391) After leaving Philippi Paul made it to Jerusalem for Pentecost and it was at that time that he was taken captive. These quotes show that Paul kept the feasts with Gentile converts, away from Jerusalem, at the end of his ministry. Some who are against feast keeping state that the feasts cannot be kept away from Jerusalem, that Paul only went to the feasts to evangelize and convert the Jews and not because he was keeping the feasts, and that Paul initially kept the feasts because he was a "Pharisee of Pharisees" and didn't realize until later in his ministry that they were abolished. These above two quotes show all of these arguments against the feasts to be false. These quotes also show that those who interpret Paul's writings in Colossians 2:14-17 as saying the feasts are abolished are also incorrect because Paul would not be teaching the Colossians that the feasts were abolished when he was keeping the feasts with his Gentile converts in Philippi. Paul would not be conflicting with himself! Those who interpret these verses in Colossians chapter two as saying that the feasts were abolished make the Bible conflict with the Bible and Paul conflict with himself because elsewhere the Bible is clear that Paul is teaching his Gentile converts to keep the feasts. (See also 1 Corinthians 5:8) One rule of Biblical interpretation is that the Bible never conflicts with itself. If one's interpretation causes the Bible to conflict with itself then we may know that the interpretation is incorrect.

The final major reason that we observe the feasts is because they are all prophetic, pointing out the future. In the following quote, Ellen White calls the feasts "types" and points out that they point out not only what is going to happen in the future, but when. "The slaying of the Passover lamb was a shadow of the death of Christ. Says Paul: 'Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.' 1 Corinthians 5:7. The sheaf of first fruits, which at the time of the Passover was waved before the Lord, was typical of the resurrection of Christ. Paul says, in speaking of the resurrection of the Lord and of all His people: 'Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming.' 1 Corinthians 15:23. Like the wave sheaf, which was the first ripe grain gathered before the harvest, Christ is the first fruits of that immortal harvest of redeemed ones that at the future resurrection shall be gathered into the garner of God. **These types were fulfilled, not only as to the event, but as to the time.** On the fourteenth day of the first Jewish month, the very day and month on which for fifteen long centuries the Passover lamb had been slain, Christ, having eaten the Passover with His disciples, instituted that feast which was to commemorate His own death as 'the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' That same night He was taken by wicked hands to be crucified and slain. And as the antitype of the wave sheaf our Lord was raised from the dead on the third day, 'the first fruits of them that slept,' a sample of all the resurrected just, whose 'vile body' shall be changed, and 'fashioned like unto His glorious body.' Verse 20; Philippians 3:21. **In like manner the types which relate to the second advent must be fulfilled at the time pointed out in the symbolic service.**" (*Great Controversy*, pp. 399-400)

What is being said here is that Passover pointed forward to Jesus' death and on the very day of Passover, Jesus died. Also, Firstfruits pointed forward to Jesus' resurrection, and on that very day He rose from the grave. Thus the feasts point out not only what is going to happen, but when it is going to happen, as the fulfillment is on the very day of the feast that pointed forward to the event. Next comes the icing on the cake. In like manner, the feasts that point forward to the Second Coming will be fulfilled. In other words, the Second Coming will occur on a feast day. The Bible says the same. Daniel 8:19 says, "For at the time appointed the end shall be." The Hebrew word behind the word "appointed" in this text is "moed" which is the same word used for "feast" in Leviticus chapter 23, the chapter that speaks of the feasts. Paul also says the feasts point out the future. "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days:

Which are a shadow **of things to come.**” (Colossians 2:16-17) The word “holyday” in this text means feast days and Paul is saying that these feast days are a shadow pointing out yet future events.

We have found that most of the feast days have more than one fulfillment. For instance, Passover had a fulfillment when the destroying angel “passed over” all the Israelite homes who had the blood on their doorposts, and then the Israelites left Egypt to start their journey for Canaan. The next fulfillment of Passover was when Jesus died for our sins on Passover as the Passover Lamb. Jesus tells us of the next fulfillment of Passover which is yet future. “And He said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” Jesus is saying that Passover will not be fulfilled until we get to heaven, which is the Wedding Supper of Jesus and His Bride, which is His people. Firstfruits pointed forward to Jesus’ resurrection, to the final resurrection at the Second Coming, and also to the 144,000, who are called “firstfruits.” (1 Corinthians 15:22-23; Revelation 14:1-5) The Feast of Unleavened Bread points forward to God’s people getting sin out of their lives, something that is still in the process of fulfillment. Pentecost points forward to the early and the latter rains of the Holy Spirit. The Feast of Trumpets points forward to the fulfillment of the Trumpets of Revelation chapters eight and nine. The Feast of Tabernacles points forward to the Second Coming, the New Jerusalem descending down to this earth, and the earth being recreated at the end of the Millennium. All of these events will take place on the very feast day that pointed forward to this event, making the feast days prophetic in addition to teaching the gospel.

Now for a final thought about the feasts being prophetic. Since all the feasts, including Passover, according to Jesus Himself, have yet future fulfillments, that means that none of the feasts have been completely fulfilled. Jesus said in Matthew 5:17-18, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall I no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled.” The word “law” in this text comes from the Greek word “nomos” which means Mosaic Law or Torah. The Torah is the first five books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These books are known as the books of the law, or the Torah. In other words, what Jesus was saying was that not one word, not even the smallest part of a letter (the tittle) and the jot (which is the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet) would be abolished from the law, or Torah, until it had been completely fulfilled. Remember, the feasts are commanded in the Torah. Therefore there is absolutely no way that the feasts have been abolished at the present time, according to Jesus.

To recap, the feasts teach the complete gospel, the sanctuary, righteousness by faith, the three angels’ messages, and prophecy. The feasts are rehearsals for Jesus’ Bride (His people) of things to come, so that by rehearsing these events in advance we will be ready for these events when they arrive. We, the Bride of Jesus, have been instructed to study, follow and rehearse our Ketubah (the Bible), so we will be ready when Jesus (our Bridgroom), comes to take us to the wedding feast, which is the final fulfillment of Passover in heaven. The feasts are in nearly every book of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. According to Jesus, there is no possibility that the feasts could have been abolished because they all have yet future fulfillments and nothing is abolished unless it has been completely fulfilled.

We have merely given you a brief overview of the feasts in this article. If you are interested in learning much more about the feasts, read our book *God’s Holidays*, which you can download and read for free at www.godsholidays.com. Perhaps now you are beginning to see why many people are so excited about learning about the feasts, how the feasts significantly enhance their relationship with God, and how this message helps people to understand the entire Bible so much better, making the Bible a new book all over for them to study.

We are convinced that even after all these years of celebrating the feasts that we are merely

scratching the surface as to their meaning and that much more is yet to be discovered. When we discover the additional truths that the feasts have to offer we will be drawn into an even closer relationship with God as a result, and we will love Him more and more fervently as we realize the lengths and the depths that Jesus has gone to save us. We submit to you that most likely it will be those who are celebrating the feasts who will discover these additional truths. Why? Because if we aren't celebrating and rehearsing the feasts, we tend to forget they even exist. In all our years of growing up in the church, and going through the church school system clear through college, we never once heard a sermon about the feasts. It's not surprising. The church has forgotten about them and their beautiful messages, because the church is falsely teaching that the feasts were abolished at the cross. Consequently, many beautiful lessons are being missed. This is one crucial reason why God has instructed us to observe them and why they haven't been abolished. He doesn't want us to forget the lessons He is trying to teach us through them. We challenge you, dear readers, to study these feasts intensely and be among those who discover these deeper lessons that God is longing for us to find. May God richly bless you as you study is our prayer.