

# Shall we keep the Feasts?

Compiled by Adam Mills

**See Dan. 9:27; Gal. 4:9-11; Eph.2:15; Col.2:14-17; Heb. 8:13-9:10; 2 Cor. 3:6-13**

**"The typical service and the ceremonies connected with it were abolished at the cross.** The great antitypical Lamb of God had become an offering for guilty man, and **the shadow ceased in the substance.** Paul was seeking to bring the minds of men to the great truth for the time; but these who claimed to be followers of Jesus were wholly absorbed in teaching the tradition of the Jews, and the obligation of circumcision" (RH May 29, 1888).

**"After Christ died on the cross as a sin offering the ceremonial law could have no force.** Yet it was connected with the moral law, and was glorious. The whole bore the stamp of divinity, and expressed the holiness, justice, and righteousness of God. And if the ministration of the dispensation to be done away was glorious, how much more must the reality be glorious, when Christ was revealed, giving His life-giving, sanctifying, Spirit to all who believe" (RH April 22, 1902)?

**"The rites and ceremonies of the law** were given by Christ Himself, who, enshrouded in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, was the leader of the hosts of Israel; and this law should be treated with great respect, for it is sacred. Even after it **was no longer to be observed,** Paul presented it before the Jews in its true position and value, showing its place in the plan of redemption and its relation to the work of Christ; and the great apostle pronounces this law glorious, worthy of its divine Originator. **That which was to be done away was glorious,** but it was not the law instituted by God for the government of His family in heaven and on earth; for as long as the heavens shall remain, so long shall the law of the Lord endure.

Christ came to teach men the way of salvation; and we might expect that when **the shadowy service was no longer of any value,** if the law of ten commandments were no longer binding, he would declare its abrogation." (ST July 29, 1886).

**"The ceremonies connected with the services of the temple, prefiguring Christ in types and shadows, were taken away at the time of the crucifixion, because on the cross type met antitype** in the death of the true and perfect offering, the Lamb of God. The law of the ten commandments lives and will live through the eternal ages. The need for the service of sacrifices and offerings ceased when type met antitype in the death of Christ. In Him the shadow reached the substance. The Lamb of God was the complete and perfect offering.

The law of God will maintain its exalted character as long as the throne of Jehovah endures. This law is the expression of God's character. . . . **Types and shadows,** offerings and sacrifices **had no virtue after Christ's death on the cross;** but God's law was not crucified with Christ." 6BC 1115, 1116

"The Feast of Tabernacles **was** not only commemorative but **typical.**" PP 541

**"When the Saviour yielded up His life on Calvary, the significance of the Passover ceased,** and the ordinance of the Lord's Supper was instituted as a memorial of the same event of which **the Passover had been a type.**" {PP 539.3}

“While the institution of the Passover was pointing backward to the miraculous deliverance of the

Hebrews, it likewise pointed forward, showing the death of the Son of God before it transpired. In the last Passover our Lord observed with His disciples, **He instituted the Lord's Supper in place of the Passover, to be observed in memory of His death. No longer had they need of the Passover**, for He, the great antitypical Lamb, was ready to be sacrificed for the sins of the world. Type met antitype in the death of Christ" (Youth's Instructor, May 1873).

**"Christ has taken his people into his church. He has swept away every ceremony of the ancient type. He has given no liberty to restore these rites, or to substitute anything** that will recall the old literal sacrifices. The Lord requires of his people spiritual sacrifices alone." RH 2/25/96

**"In this ordinance, Christ discharged His disciples from the cares and burdens of the ancient Jewish obligations in rites and ceremonies. These no longer possessed any virtue; for type was meeting antitype in Himself**, the authority and foundation of all Jewish ordinances that pointed to Him as the great and only efficacious offering for the sins of the world. He gave this simple ordinance that it might be a special season when He Himself would always be present, to lead all participating in it to feel the pulse of their own conscience, to awaken them to an understanding of the lessons symbolized, to revive their memory, to convict of sin, and to receive their penitential repentance. He would teach them that brother is not to exalt himself above brother, that the dangers of disunion and strife shall be seen and appreciated; for the health and holy activity of the soul are involved. This ordinance does not speak so largely to man's intellectual capacity as to his heart. His moral and spiritual nature needs it. If His disciples had not needed this, it would not have been left for them as Christ's last established ordinance in connection with, and including, the last supper. **It was Christ's desire to leave to His disciples an ordinance that would do for them the very thing they needed-- that would serve to disentangle them from the rites and ceremonies which they had hitherto engaged in as essential, and which the reception of the gospel made no longer of any force. To continue these rites would be an insult to Jehovah.** Eating of the body, and drinking of the blood, of Christ, not merely at the sacramental service, but daily partaking of the bread of life to satisfy the soul's hunger, would be in receiving His Word and doing His will" (RH June 14, 1898).

**"With great assurance these Judaizing teachers asserted that in order to be saved, one must be circumcised and must keep the entire ceremonial law.**

Paul and Barnabas met this false doctrine with promptness and opposed the introduction of the subject to the Gentiles. On the other hand, many of the believing Jews of Antioch favored the position of the brethren recently come from Judea.

The Jewish converts generally were not inclined to move as rapidly as the providence of God opened the way. From the result of the apostles' labors among the Gentiles it was evident that the converts among the latter people would far exceed the Jewish converts in number. The Jews feared that if the restrictions and ceremonies of their law were not made obligatory upon the Gentiles as a condition of church fellowship, the national peculiarities of the Jews, which had hitherto kept them distinct from all other people, would finally disappear from among those who received the gospel message.

The Jews had always prided themselves upon their divinely appointed services, and many of those who had been converted to the faith of Christ still felt that since God had once clearly outlined the Hebrew manner of worship, it was improbable that He would ever authorize a change in any of its specifications. They insisted that the Jewish laws and ceremonies should be incorporated into the rites of the Christian religion. They were slow to discern that **all the sacrificial offerings had but prefigured the death of the Son of God, in which type met antitype, and after which the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic dispensation were no longer binding.**" AA 188,189

There is a law which was abolished, which Christ "took out of the way, nailing it to His cross." Paul

calls it **“the law of commandments contained in ordinances.”** This ceremonial law, given by God through Moses, with its sacrifices and ordinances, was to be binding upon the Hebrews until type met antitype in the death of Christ as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world. Then all the sacrificial offerings and services were to be abolished. Paul and the other apostles laboured to show this, and resolutely withstood those Judaizing teachers who declared that Christians ought to observe the ceremonial law. {BEcho April 16, 1894, par. 2}

“At His death Christ blotted out the handwriting that was against us, “and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.” In every ceremony, in every sacrifice, His death had been prefigured. He was the foundation of the sacrificial system, which was to last till in His death type should meet antitype. He **“abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances;** for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby....” Lt56-1902 (April 6, 1902, par. 19)

### **How does one harmonize this counsel with what appears to be Paul's own practice of observing feasts in connection with Gentile converts (Acts 18:21; AA 390-391)?**

1. Paul 'kept' the feast for the very same reason why he had Timothy circumcised (Acts 16: 1-3). Paul had a continual longing to reach his own kinsmen with the gospel of Christ until his untimely death. And because of this he states "And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews;..." 1 Cor. 9:20. Therefore, any 'keeping' of these shadows would not have been based upon any conviction on the part of Paul that they were still binding as a matter of faith and practice. We know that Paul actually cut his ministry and life short by taking his burden for his kinsmen too far (see Acts 21).
2. The statement cited above does not specifically state that this feast was kept WITH the Gentile believers. Instead it states "DURING the eight days of the feast he enjoyed peaceful and happy communion with them". This may or may not have been a joint celebration, inasmuch as he may have simply done BOTH separately.
3. Even if he did indeed celebrate it together with the Gentiles, this in no way can be used to destroy his clear statement (Col. 2:16,17) regarding 'holydays' [GREEK WORD: 'HEORTE' WHICH MEANS 'FEASTS' OR 'FESTIVALS'] and 'sabbaths' having been "blotted out", and "taken out of the way", and thus, no longer obligatory, or a matter worthy of judgment upon believers, this side of the cross of Christ. In the same vein, Paul's clear statements regarding the obsolete nature of circumcision (1 Cor. 7:18,19; Gal. 5:2,6; 6:15) cannot be destroyed merely because he had Timothy circumcised. Both matters are dealt with by Paul in terms too clear to be misunderstood.
4. Much of Paul's labor in the various cities began with both Jews AND GENTILES who had been worshipping together in synagogues for centuries ( see Acts 15:19-21). Therefore, it is likely {or at least possible} that if the Philippian believers did, indeed, keep the feast, it was simply due to previous practice among the Jews, which they, as well as the Jewish converts (not to mention, EVEN the apostles THEMSELVES) were slow to discern, had been made obsolete by the arrival of the BODY (Messiah) of these shadows.

\* NOTE: As the statements in this study indicate, the fact that these shadows no longer hold virtue does not mean that they hold no value as a teaching aid. Consequently, the non-observance of them *in practice*, is not to be equated with abolishing them from our KNOWLEDGE.