

Were the Feast Days Observed in the book of Genesis?

By Peter Salemi

BICOG Publication

[This booklet is not to be sold. It is a free educational service in the public interest, published by the British-Israel Church of God]

Were the Feast Days Observed in the book of Genesis?

Many do not realize that the festivals God ordained in the Old Testament were called “**My Feasts**” (Lev 23:2). These are not the festivals of the Jews, but GOD’S FEASTS! God *gave* them to Israel to celebrate!

God intended for man to celebrate these festivals from the *beginning*. During the re-creation of the earth, God, says in Genesis 1:14, “And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for *seasons*, and for days, and years.”

The word translated “seasons” in the above verse was originally “moedim.” (Strong’s #4150). This Hebrew word is not only translated as “seasons.” It is translated as “feasts” in Leviticus 23:2, 4, 37, and 44.

Strong’s says, “properly an *appointment*, that is, a fixed *time* or season; specifically a *festival*; conventionally a *year*; by implication, an *assembly* (as convened for a definite purpose); technically the *congregation*; by extension, the *place of meeting*; also a *signal* (as appointed beforehand): - appointed (sign, time), (place of, solemn) assembly, congregation, (set, solemn) feast, (appointed, due) season, solemn (-ity), synagogue, (set) time (appointed).” (Emphasis His).

This explains why this verse reads as it does in the following Bible versions: (New English Bible) – “(The Heavenly Lights were created) for *festivals (religious feast days)*...”

Genesis 1:14 (Good News Bible) “Let them (the heavenly lights) serve for the time when days, years, and *religious festivals begin*.”

In the Hebrew Stone’s Edition Tanach, (O.T.) Genesis 1:14 translates “... and they shall serve as signs, and for *festivals*, and for days and years.”

Psalms 104:19 “He [God] appointed the moon for seasons...” the word “seasons” again is “moedim” which is “appointed times, festivals.”

Now, if the annual Sabbaths (religious festivals of God) were *only* about sin and sacrifices, what are they doing at Creation? Their very presence in this sinless era of Earth’s timeline demonstrates that the annual Sabbaths have value and validity OUTSIDE of SIN. The festivals *original* intent was for “rejoicing” and worshipping God (Deut 16:13-14).

In the Amplified Bible Genesis 1:14 says, “Let them be signs, and tokens (these lights) of *God’s provident care*.” Provident care points to a sign of God’s covenant. These appointed times are also signs of God’s agreement with us, that He is our God and we are His people.

The Calendar

In the days of Noah the calendar was established in his day, “In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened... And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first *month*, the first *day* of the month, the waters were

Were the Feast Days Observed in the book of Genesis?

dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry... And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried.” (Gen 7:11; 8:4, 13-14).

The weekly cycle was also used by Noah, “For *yet seven days*, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth.... And it came to pass *after seven days*, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth.” (Gen 7:4, 10). This was *not* some new revelation from God. The language shows that the weekly cycle was *known* to Noah it wasn’t *explained* to Noah.

Clarke’s Commentary states, “God spoke these words probably on the seventh or Sabbath day, and the *days of the ensuing week were employed in* entering the ark,” (Emphasis added).

In addition to this Bullingers Companion Bible Notes states that, “All the Flood dates are Sabbaths”

God gave “A week for a world to repent!” (Jamieson Faussett and Brown).

Where else could Noah learn the calendar but from the *descendants* of Adam! In fact the line of Seth which was “appointed” by God (Gen 4:25) were to *preserve* the knowledge of God, and Noah was from this family line (Genesis 5).

When Noah was born Lamech his father said of Noah, “This *same* shall comfort us *concerning our work* and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed.” (Gen 5:29). This passage reveals “our work” *and* “toil of our hands.” Physical labor and the spiritual labor *the work of God*. They were preserving the knowledge of God, the “the *book* of the generations of Adam” (Gen 5:1). The instructions God gave to Adam and his seed, through Seth down to Noah. Noah was “a preacher of righteousness,” (2 Peter 2:5). He preached the law of God he knew and understood it. The calendar revealed in Genesis 1 along with the weekly cycle was preserved through Noah, and the “appointed feast” days [Moedim] along with it.

God’s Festivals for all mankind

Most people assume that God gave the Holy days *only* to His people at Sinai-*but* is that Biblical? Many opponents and no law people reason that since the feast days were *not* kept by the Old Testament Patriarchs, then we as Christians are not obligated to keep them.

Did the Passover have any meaning or significance *before* the Exodus? Did the Holy Days have some meaning *before* God delivered the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt? If so, would that not mean that the Holy Days show aspects of God’s plan *apart* from Moses and would also be added reason why they remain important for Christians today?

Arguing that since the Old Testament Patriarchs did not keep the feast days really is an *argument from silence*. There are nuggets of proof in the book of Genesis that show that they did. The creation of the calendar as noted above is one. Just because Genesis doesn’t mention Adam and Eve keeping the feasts doesn’t mean they didn’t. Genesis is a book of *origins* not commands, and

Were the Feast Days Observed in the book of Genesis?

scattered throughout the book of Genesis the law of God *can be seen*. Obviously the law was given *orally* to the Patriarchs, and then *written down* during the time of Moses, but the law existed! One such law is the *origin* of the Sabbath (Gen 2).

Others:

- The Law of clean and unclean meats (Gen 7:2, 8).
- Noah was “righteous” before God (Gen 7:1). God’s righteousness is his law (Psalm 119:172).
- Law of Sacrifices (Gen 4:3-5; 8:20-21).
- Eye for and Eye law (Gen 9:6).
- Life of the flesh is in the blood (Gen 9:4).
- God’s Covenant established (Gen 9:9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17).

God’s law existed long before Sinai given *orally*, written down afterwards by Moses to establish it as the constitution for the nation of Israel.

God is consistent “I change not” God says in Malachi 3:6. God’s law is commanded and kept throughout the old and the new testaments, and it’s the way of Salvation (*Read out booklet the Saving Works of God for details*).

Can it be shown that the feast days were kept during the days of the Old Testament patriarchs? If these festivals were kept by the Old Testament Patriarchs and ordained during the time of Adam and Eve, and the others, then these festivals are for all mankind!

Jesus when he returns to this earth and sets up the Kingdom of God, he will have “...*all the nations* which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, *and to keep the feast of tabernacles*.” (Zech 14:16). All nations are going to keep the feast of Tabernacles. Was this God’s intent from the beginning? As noted above God ordained his calendar for *festivals*. The word “moedim” means “feasts.” Since it was *God* who created the calendar, *what festivals does he mean* in Genesis 1:14? The festivals he calls “MY FEASTS [moedim]” (Lev 23:2).

Feasts in Genesis

Can the festivals be found in the book of Genesis?

The Patriarch Joseph interestingly enough kept the Feast of Trumpets! Psalms says, “**Blow up the trumpet in the new moon**, in the time appointed, **on our solemn feast day**.”

“For this *was* a statute for Israel, *and* a law of the God of Jacob.

“**This** he ordained in Joseph *for* a testimony, **when he went out through the land of Egypt**: *where* I heard a language *that* I understood not.” (81:3-5). The only “New Moon” which is a “solemn feast day” and is about blowing Trumpets – (see Leviticus 23:24) is the Feast of Trumpets that Joseph observed in Egypt. This was about 400 years BEFORE Sinai!

Were the Feast Days Observed in the book of Genesis?

There is an interesting truth about The Feast of Trumpets and Day of Atonement. Both share, "...two fundamental differences from the *other* festivals. First, both *feasts were not connected with any special historical or national event*. They were seen as *universal and most personal celebrations*. A time for the *individual* to stand before the judgment seat of God, seeking for forgiveness and cleansing." (God's Festivals vol. 2, by Samuele Bacchiocchi, p.54, emphasis added). These two festivals were not tied to any event but *were universal and personal in nature which can include all of mankind not just Israel*. One can see these festivals being observed without any attachment to a people or event due to divine intervention. One can understand then the observance of these days during the time *before* the giving of the law at Sinai. However the *other* festivals *also* pertain to all of mankind as well as Israel as well shall see.

In the days of Lot before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot said to the angels, "Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways...*and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.*" (Gen 19:2, 3).

The word "Feast" is "מִשְׁתֶּה, [mishteh Strong's #4960] a feast, is the name usually given to a *great feast or banquet*. Comp. Genesis 21:8; Genesis 26:30; Genesis 40:20; 1 Samuel 25:36." (Whedon's Commentary on the Bible, emphasis added). This was a "great feast" not something that was just thrown together in haste. Feast like these are usually prepared because of an *occasion*, like the weaning of Isaac (Gen 21:8); or a covenant (Gen 26: 28, 30); a birthday (Gen 40:20); and sheep-shearing season (1 Sam 25:36).

God's Word Translation says, "He prepared a *special dinner* for them, baked some unleavened bread, and they ate." This banquet had a *special occasion* attached to it.

The *other* word for "feast" which is used is "chag" "chagag" (#2282; 2287). This means a celebration or "festival." It means more specifically a *festival* season. The word in Genesis 19:3 is speaking of the *meal*, or banquet or feast; but *attached* to it was a special occasion. This *special meal* involved "unleavened cakes."

The Unleavened Bread was of course "Heb., thin cakes, like those now eaten by the Jews at the *Passover*." (Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, emphasis added).

Strong's defines this word "matstsâh" as "specifically an *unfermented cake* or loaf, or (elliptically) the festival of *Passover* (because no leaven was then used): - unleavened (bread, cake), without leaven." (#4682, emphasis his). The same word can be found in Exo 12:8; 12:15, 17-18, :20, 39; Exo 13:6-7 for the festival of the Passover and Unleavened bread.

The Tree of Life Version renders the passage, "He prepared a feast for them and *baked matzot, and they ate.*"

This meal "mishteh" with the *occasion attached* to it- the "chagag" was the celebration of the festival of unleavened bread; *why else would people eat unleavened bread?*

Now *when* did God destroy Sodom and Gomorrah? What season was it?

Were the Feast Days Observed in the book of Genesis?

In Genesis 18 when the angels visited Abraham then went to Sodom to destroy it, they said to Him, “At the time appointed [moedim] I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.” (v.14). The “time of life” means, “[Hebrew, kaa`eet (H6256) chayaah (H2416); with the reviving year] - i.e., *the coming spring*, when the winter shall be past and nature revives (Gesenius). [Septuagint, kata ton kairon touton eis hooras (cf. 2Kings 4:16-17).]” (Jamieson Faussett and Brown Commentary, emphasis added). At an appointed time “moedim” meaning *feast or season*, in the spring Isaac was to be born.

The birth of Isaac was to occur exactly the next year at the same time, as the Pulpit Commentary explains, “Literally, *at the time reviving; i.e.* when the year shall have been renewed, *in the next year, or rather spring;*” (emphasis added). So it was in the *spring* that Sodom was destroyed.

Also Abraham prepared a meal for them, “And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant:

“Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree:

“And I *will fetch a morsel of bread*, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said.

“And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly *three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth.*

“And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave *it* unto a young man; and he hastened to dress it.

“And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set *it* before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.” (Gen 18:3-8). This meal was “[Hebrew, c^aiym (H5429)]. The seah contained six ephahs, and three ephahs made an ephah - i.e., about three pecks of meal, *baked into unfermented or unleavened cakes*, made the supply of bread on a scale equal to that of the animal food.” (Jamieson Faussett and Brown Commentary, emphasis added).

It is obvious that this was during the *spring* season during the Passover and the days of unleavened bread.

After this they headed to Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18:16). Sodom and Gomorrah was destroyed during this time.

This meal that Lot prepared was the meal eaten during the festival of unleavened bread, or else *why eats unleavened bread?* How did Lot *know* that it was the unleavened bread season? Abraham himself understood about the days of unleavened bread, and obviously told Lot. When was this established?

The Passover before Exodus

The “Passover” was the event that took place that freed the Israelites from Egypt. Many do not realize that God freed Israel on a festival *already* ordained in the days of Abraham and even *before*-the festival of unleavened bread.

What does “Passover” really mean? Is it just for Israel? Or is it universal in nature?

Were the Feast Days Observed in the book of Genesis?

The First time the term is used is in Exodus 12:11, it says, “it *is* the LORD’S Passover.” Many take this to mean that it was the time when God freed Israel from Egypt. Yes, *but* the meaning is deeper than that. God not only freed Israel from the bondage of Slavery; God also freed them from Sin. Sin is a universal problem of *all* mankind.

God gives the meaning of the Passover in the next verse, “For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt *I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.*

“And *the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are:* and when **I see the blood, I will pass over you**, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy *you*, when I smite the land of Egypt.” (vv.12-13). God is dealing with sin. Blood makes an *atonement* for sin (Lev 17:11). God saw the blood; and the house did not come under the judgment of God.

In the New Testament it uses the same terminology for sin as well. Romans 3:25 the Apostle Paul says of Jesus sacrifice on the cross as, “whom God sent to be an *atoning sacrifice*, through faith in his blood, for a demonstration of his righteousness *through the passing over of prior sins*, in God’s forbearance;” (Word English Bible). This translation takes the words in the Greek exactly how the Apostle Paul wanted them to be understood; Jesus as the Passover Lamb, and God “*passing over*” *our past sins*, and we are *not* under his judgment. This is the true meaning of the Passover! So this does not limit the Passover to ONE EVENT in Egypt, but is universal in nature involving ALL of Mankind!

Now the Bible contains some clues about the importance of the holy days, particularly Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread, *before* the Exodus. Let us uncover the clues that the Bible gives and understand them as best as we can. We know for certain that Passover was important to God *before* the Exodus from a little-noticed clue that takes place in the Exodus account itself. Let us begin our search in the Bible for the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread *before* the Exodus by looking at Exodus 12:40-41. Exodus 12:40-41 gives us a very intriguing detail about the Passover: “Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, *was* four hundred and thirty years.

“And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, *even the selfsame day it came to pass*, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.”

Now the true rendering of these verses as Jamieson Faussett and Brown Commentary states, “The Septuagint adds the clause: *kai en gee Chanaan, and in the land of Canaan*, and the Alexandrian Codex, the Samaritan text, and the Targum of Jonathan, have this further insertion [autoi kai hoi pateres autoon]; so that the reading is: ‘*They and their fathers sojourned in Egypt, and in the land of Canaan 430 years.*’

“Through the indirect influence of the Septuagint, Josephus, and the Rabbis, the truthfulness of whose views has been supposed to be endorsed by Paul (Gal 3:17), the popular interpretation of this passage is to consider it as embracing the entire period, *from the call of Abraham to the exodus*:-thus reducing the actual stay of the Israelites in Egypt to 215 years, while the previous half was that passed by the patriarchs in Canaan. The point of commencement in the computation is laid in the prophetic announcement to Abraham.”

Were the Feast Days Observed in the book of Genesis?

“The date is repeated by the historian in order to show *that the intimation made to Abraham (Gen 15:13-16) was realized*, and that the time of deliverance corresponded with the most minute exactness to the prophetic announcement” (emphasis added).

When God made that Covenant with Abraham in Genesis the 15th chapter and showed him what would come to pass to his seed in Egypt “and they shall afflict them four hundred years;” (v.13) And that God would deliver them-this covenant was made on the Passover. Notice the scripture says, “And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, *even the selfsame day it came to pass*, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.”

God made the covenant with Abraham, “*In the same day* the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:” (v.18). *That same day* was the day that started the 430 year count down. *This fact was important enough to be recorded in scripture*. If the very day of Passover and the Days of Unleavened were *not* important, it would not have been mentioned in a passage that commands the observance of this festival from generation to generation.

Now before God made this covenant with Abraham there is a significant incident that shows the symbols of the Passover *nearly two thousand years before Jesus Christ* given by a priest who the books of Psalms and Hebrews say *is* Jesus Christ. We find this story in Genesis 14:18-20.

Genesis 14:18-20 reads: “And Melchizedek king of Salem *brought forth bread and wine*: and he *was* the priest of the most high God.
“And he blessed him, and said, Blessed *be* Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth:
“And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all. [Notice the law of Tithes *before* Moses]”

This is a very mysterious passage. The identity of this Melchizedek is very obscure, but he is undoubtedly a very important person, and he is so important that Jesus Christ, our High Priest, is Himself a high priest in the order of Melchizedek. It is significant that this high priest Melchizedek, who is higher than Abraham, *gives bread and wine to Abraham* and blesses him.

Now the word for “bread” is, “lechem” (Strong’s #3899). This is the same word used for the “manna” that came down from heaven. “Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread [lechem] from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.” (Ex 16:4).

Jesus said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you *the true bread from heaven*.
“*For the bread of God* is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.
“Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.
“And Jesus said unto them, *I am the bread of life*: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.” (John 6:32-35). Jesus is the “unleavened bread” that is to be eaten during the Passover. Leaven is a symbol of sin (1 Corinth 5:8; Luke 12:1). Unleavened bread is a symbol of Christ who has no sin (Heb 4:15).

Were the Feast Days Observed in the book of Genesis?

After all, bread and wine are the symbols of the New Covenant Passover. The bread is symbolic of Christ's body, broken for our sins. The wine is symbolic of the blood of Christ, shed for our sins. *Not coincidentally, the Spring of the year was the time that kings went out to fight, and that is exactly what had happened before this blessing, so it is entirely possible that Abraham had defeated the kings of the Elamites, Hittites, as well as Mesopotamia just before Passover and was given the symbols of the New Covenant Passover without being fully aware of the future significance of these very symbols.*

Lot after he was saved by Abraham, the priest Melchizedek instituted these symbols of the Passover, Lot understood what it meant, and continued to keep this feast in Sodom.

Notice after the giving of the bread and wine to Abraham it says in Genesis 15:1 "after these things" God came to Abraham and made a covenant with him. After the ratifying of the covenant and the vision of Israel in Egypt, the 430 year count down began on the Passover, and expired on the Passover 430 years later in the days of Moses.

There is an addition, one more story *before* the Exodus that shows a clear connection with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ that took place on the Passover, also from the life of Abraham. We find this story in Genesis 22:1-14.

It is impossible for a Christian to read the story of Isaac's sacrifice without thinking of the connection to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Just as God the Father had to sacrifice His "only begotten son," Jesus Christ, so Abraham was called to sacrifice his only begotten son Isaac, knowing that God would resurrect him so that they would return, because Isaac was the promised seed of Abraham, just as Christ was (Rom 4:17-21). The [near-] sacrifice of Isaac took place on Mount Moriah, in Jerusalem, which is where Jesus Christ was sacrificed. Isaac willingly carried the wood for the sacrifice, let himself be tied up to that wood, and was prepared to give up his life. Jesus Christ willingly let himself be imprisoned, carried the cross on his back, was willingly nailed to that wood, and did give up His life for us as a sacrifice for sin. Abraham told Isaac that God would "provide" (v.8) the lamb for the burnt offering. In the end, Jesus Christ was the promised Passover lamb.

Jesus told the Jews of his day, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see *my day*: and he saw *it*, and was glad." (John 8:56). Abraham rejoice for he saw that God will provide a lamb as he did provide the sacrifice in his own son Isaac's stead (Gen 22:13). *He saw the Passover of the future, the Passover lamb Jesus Christ!*

As mentioned the Passover *was already instituted* by God in the days of Abraham and he freed Israel *on that same day*, and he freed all of mankind with the sacrifice of Christ on the Passover-*a day already instituted by God.*

A third story from the very beginning of Genesis, in Genesis 3:15-16, if one wishes to explore it, shows that Satan will bruise the heel of the Seed of Eve, as Christ's heel was bruised during the crucifixion, demonstrating that the origins of the New Covenant Passover goes back all the way to Eden.

Were the Feast Days Observed in the book of Genesis?

Eve at the Birth of her son, Cain said, “I have gotten a man from the LORD.” (Gen 4:1). This should really read, “I have gotten a man—Jehovah” (Jonathon, Luther, Baumgarten, Lewis); Many realize that Eve when she named Cain “signifies acquisition;” (Barnes Notes). Most expositors think that *Eve imagined Cain to be the promised seed* that should bruise the head of the serpent therefore being the Messiah (Gen 3:15). The idea of Passover going all the way back to Eden is plausible knowing that Eve knew that a Messiah must appear to defeat the devil and to pay the penalty for the sins of the world. Already Adam and Eve had Cain and Abel sacrificing to God for their sins (Gen 4:3-5). Further back than this we see the sacrificial system instituted after the fall of man (Gen 3:21; Rev 19:8).

God made coats of skins –“It is very likely that the skins out of which their clothing was made were taken off animals whose blood had been poured *out as a sin-offering to God*; for as we find Cain and Abel offering sacrifices to God, we may fairly presume *that God had given them instructions on this head*; nor is it likely *that the notion of a sacrifice could have ever occurred to the mind of man without an express revelation from God*. Hence we may safely infer 1. That as Adam and Eve needed this clothing as soon as they fell, and death had not as yet made any ravages in the animal world, *it is most likely that the skins were taken off victims offered under the direction of God himself*, and in faith of Him who, in the fullness of time, was to make an atonement by his death.” (Clarke’s Commentary, emphasis added).

“By selecting the skins of beasts for the clothing of the first men, and therefore causing the death or slaughter of beasts for that purpose, He showed them how they might use the sovereignty they possessed over the animals for their own good, *and even sacrifice animal life for the preservation of human*; so that *this act of God laid the foundation for the sacrifices*, even if the first clothing did not prefigure our ultimate ‘clothing upon’ (2Cor 5:4), nor the coats of skins the robe of righteousness.” (K&D Commentary, emphasis added).

So originally the Passover was, and still is for *all* of mankind. The sacrifices were offered to God, and God “passed over” their past sins by the blood of the sacrifice as atonement for their souls.

Jacob’s ladder and the Feast of Tabernacles

Many know of the story of Jacob’s ladder. But many do not know the spiritual meaning behind it.

Jacob set up a stone for his pillow (Gen 28:11) and had a dream, “And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.” (v.12). Angels were descending and ascending on “it” meaning the “stone,” because afterwards Jacob “anointed” the stone and called it “Bethel” the “house of God.

“And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put *for* his pillows, and set it up *for* a pillar, and *poured oil upon the top of it*....And this stone, which I have set *for* a pillar, shall be *God’s house*: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee [Law of Tithes *before* Moses].” (vv. 18, 22).

Were the Feast Days Observed in the book of Genesis?

Notice the New Testament symbolism of these Old Testament events.

Jesus is the “chief cornerstone” (Eph 2:20). He is the “rock” which the church is built (Matthew 16:18). He is the “rock” the followed the Israelites in the wilderness (1 Corinth 10:4). He is “The *stone* which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner.” (Matthew 12:10).

Jesus used this dream of Jacobs and applied it to him, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending *upon the Son of man*. [who is the Rock]” (John 1:51).

Jacob anointed the rock and called it “God’s House.” Jesus is the Messiah; and Messiah means “anointed one.”

Jesus body is called “God’s House.” The Church of God is called the “body of Christ” which is the “house of God” (see 1 Corinth 12:27; 1 Tim 3:15; Heb 3:6).

Added to this, John wrote in his Gospel, “And the Word was made flesh, and *dwelt among us*, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” The “Word” which is Jesus “dwelt” among us. The word “dwelt” should read “Tabernacled.”

Strong’s states, “Grk. skēnoō to *tent* or *encamp*, that is, (figuratively) to *occupy* (as a mansion) or (specifically) to *reside* (as God did in the Tabernacle of old...” (#4637). God’s house was the Tabernacle in the wilderness. It was his house that he dwelt, “And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may *dwell among them*” (Ex 25:8).

Jesus dwelt in a “Tabernacle,” his body. Solomon wrote speaking of the temple or house of God, “But *will God indeed dwell on the earth?* behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?” (1 Kings 8:27). When did Solomon says this? On the Feast of Tabernacles (1 Kings 8:2). On this feast he asked when God would dwell on the earth. Jesus Christ was born on the Feast of Tabernacles (*Read our Booklet on Christmas*). Why would John use that language unless Jesus was born on that day?

Now when it comes to Jacob, him anointing the stone, and the angels ascending and descending on it-this has all the ear marks of the feast of Tabernacles!

Many commentators agree that the ladder was, “...probably a type of Christ, in whom both worlds meet, and in whom the *Divine and human nature are conjoined*. The Ladder was set up on the Earth, and the Top of it reached to Heaven; *for God was manifested in the Flesh, and in him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily*. Nothing could be a more expressive emblem of the incarnation and its effects; Jesus Christ is the grand connecting medium between heaven and earth, and between God and man.” (Clarke’s Commentary, emphasis added).

This dream was about the incarnation of Christ-of Christ “*Tabernacling*” on the earth as a man.

Were the Feast Days Observed in the book of Genesis?

After the dream Jacob did not live in Palestine his permanent home but went out of his land into the lands of the east (Gen 29:1). He dwelt in tents-temporary homes, not his permanent home in Palestine. This is the whole meaning of the feast of Tabernacles.

Now when did this dream take place? In ancient Judaism many believed that Jacob when his name got changed to Israel (Gen 35:1-11), this took place on the feast of Tabernacles according to the book of Jubilees and the temple scroll. (Jubilees 32:16, 28; Temple scroll ii.128-129).

Jacob left after serving 20 years under Laban (Gen 31:41). God told him to return to Israel and God mentioned the *dream* at Bethel (Gen 31:13). Why mention that time unless it was near the *same time of the year* that the dream in Gen 28 took place? Jacob said 20 years elapsed from the time he came to Laban house which took place after the dream in Gen 28. So it had to be near the same time when he returned to Bethel where the covenant was *re-established* in Bethel again (Gen 35). So most likely the dream of Jacob (Gen 28) took place on the Feast of Tabernacles.

What of Abraham and Isaac? A Tabernacle is a temporary place to live-a mobile home that you can pitch, then pack up and pitch again. The name "Feast of Tabernacles" or "Feast of Booths" means the Feast of Temporary Dwellings.

But why was Israel to spend the Feast in temporary abodes? The answer is given in Lev 23:43, "That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel *to dwell in booths*, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt."

After the tribes of Israel came out of Egypt they had to wander in the wilderness for 40 years before going in and possessing the Promised Land. While in the wilderness they had no *permanent* dwellings. They wandered from place to place, setting up their tents, staying awhile, then pulling their tents down and moving on.

The Israelites were heirs to the land God had promised to them. But they were not yet inheritors. They were merely heirs waiting to become inheritors of the land of Canaan.

That is why they lived in temporary dwellings. *They were sojourners, pilgrims*. They lived in the world of the wilderness, but they were not of it. Their inheritance was elsewhere.

Abraham too was also a stranger and a pilgrim! God told him, "And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, *the land wherein thou art a stranger*, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." (Gen 17:8). When Abraham was in the land, God still called him a "stranger." His *full inheritance* was in the future in the Kingdom of God when he would inherit the land for ever.

When Israel was to enter the land, God still told them, "...for the land *is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me.*" (Lev 25:23). Although they entered the land, their permanent inheritance was still to come at the setting up of the Kingdom of God!

The book of Hebrews states, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed... By faith he sojourned [a temporary stay] in

Were the Feast Days Observed in the book of Genesis?

the land of promise, as in a strange country [because he hadn't yet received it for his inheritance], dwelling in tabernacles [tents, temporary dwellings] *with Isaac and Jacob*, the heirs [not yet inheritors] with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations [permanence], whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:8-10).

Yes, Abraham in faith looked for the New Jerusalem and the glorious Kingdom of God. He and other saints "died in faith, not having received the promises [the inheritance], *but having seen them afar off*, and were *persuaded* of them, and *embraced* them, and *confessed* that they were *strangers and pilgrims on the earth*" (verse 13).

They had seen them a "far off." They were "persuaded of them" and "embraced them." They "confessed" that they were "tabernacling" in this world waiting for the world to come. They had the knowledge of the meaning of the "tabernacle." They knew of the spiritual significance of it, and the Kingdom of God—the knowledge of salvation. Obviously God revealed to them this feast *as God revealed to Israel and the church of God*. For we Christians are "strangers and pilgrims" (1 Peter 2:11) in this life. We are in the wilderness of this world, but we are *not* of it (John 17:11, 14). We are separate from the world (Rev. 18:4) — heirs, but *not* yet inheritors, of our permanent dwelling place, the promised Kingdom of God.

It is this feast that Jesus will have all of mankind celebrate in the Kingdom (Zech 14). This feast is not just for Israel, but all of mankind. Jesus on the last day of the feast of Tabernacles said, "*In the last day, that great day of the feast*, Jesus stood and cried, saying, ***If any man*** thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

"He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." (John 7:37-38). Jesus was offering salvation not just to the Jews but "any man" on the last great day of the feast which was a symbol of the great white throne judgment when all mankind stands before God (Rev 20:11). God intended for all of mankind to celebrate his feasts!

The Sabbath a "Feast"

God says to Israel these are "My Feasts" (Lev 23:2). One of those festivals was the Sabbath.

Notice before Sinai God told Israel, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, *whether they will walk in my law, or no.*" (Ex 16:4). The law was in existence *before* Sinai.

At this time Moses told Israel, "This *is that* which the LORD hath said, To morrow *is* the rest of *the holy Sabbath* unto the *LORD*:" (v.23). This is the Lord's Day—the Sabbath! This was the test commandment to see whether the Israelites walk in God's law or not. The Sabbath was in *existence* before Sinai. Of course the Sabbath goes all the way back to creation! (Gen 2:1-3).

Notice what God says to Israel when they disobeyed the Sabbath commandment, "How long refuse ye to *keep my commandments and my laws*?" (v.28). These are the exact words God used in describing Abraham's obedience, "Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, *my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.*" (Gen 26:5). This included God's Sabbath Day. This wording in Exodus proves this *included* God's Sabbath—So Abraham kept the Sabbath!

Were the Feast Days Observed in the book of Genesis?

This source states, “A *pre-Mosaic Sabbath or early pre-Israelite Sabbath* is pointed to by several scholars. W. W. Cannon suggested a number of decades ago that *the ancestors of the Hebrews who migrated to Canaan brought with them some memory of the Sabbath institution*, its name, weekly recurrence, and cessation from work. More recently a similar view has been put forth by M. H. Segal, who believes that ‘*Abraham bequeathed to his descendants the conception of the seventh day as a divine rest day and that this conception was known among the Israelites in Egypt and had received among them the name of Sabbath....*’ On account of the *sudden appearance* of the Sabbath in fairly *full-fledged form in Exodus 16*, its broad grounding in the fourth commandment (Exodus 20), and the unique choice of the word ‘*remember*’ (verse 8), *one is led to assume a knowledge of the Sabbath before the time of Moses.*” (Sabbath in Scripture and History, p.30 by Gerhard F. Hasel, emphasis added).

But even farther back than this, in the day of Abel and Cain, when they came to present their sacrifices to God it says, “And in process of time” (Gen 4:3). Clarke’s Commentary says, “מִיָּמֵינוּ מִקֶּטֶט יָמִים, *mikkets yamim*, at the end of days. Some think the anniversary of the creation to be here intended; it is more probable that it means the *Sabbath*, on which Adam and his family undoubtedly offered oblations to God, as the Divine worship was certainly instituted, *and no doubt the Sabbath properly observed in that family.* This worship was, in its original institution, very simple.” (Emphasis added).

Jamieson Faussett and Brown’s commentary says the same, “*Hebrew*, ‘at the end of days,’ probably on the Sabbath.”

Some argue that this could have also *been a feast day as well as the Sabbath*. John Wesley writes, “At the end of days, either at the end of the year when they kept their *feast of ingathering*, or at the end of the days of the week, the seventh day;” (Notes on the Bible; Matthew Poole’s Commentary).

Now “Cain brought of *the fruit of the ground* an offering unto the LORD.” (v.3). Cain brought the Fruits of the land, while Abel offered a spotless lamb.

Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges states: “Probably the *best, or the earliest, of the fruit*, corresponding to *the ‘firstlings’ in Abel’s offering*. Cf. Numbers 18:12, ‘All the best (Heb. fat) of the oil, and all the best (Heb. fat) of the vintage, and of the corn.’” (Emphasis added). Where did Cain get the idea *to bring God First Fruits*? God of course! As God instructed Moses, God instructed Adam about the laws of God and the festivals. There is a strong hint here in Genesis 4 of the knowledge about this feast (Lev 23:15-22). This was the Festival of Sabbaths. One can see that the weekly Sabbath is meant as well as the feast when Sabbaths were counted till the end of the festival.

However, the First Fruits offering is not about *forgiveness* for sin. Only the shedding of the blood of the required lamb was obedient and acceptable for a sin offering. Thus, Cain’s offering was not accepted by God for *forgiveness* of sin.

It’s interesting that “Aristotle, ‘Ethics,’ 8:2, notes that anciently sacrifices were offered after the gathering of the fruits of the earth (Ainsworth).” (Pulpit Commentary).

Were the Feast Days Observed in the book of Genesis?

Again the argument that Adam and Eve did *not* keep the Sabbath is an argument from silence. In that case, it is incorrect to conclude that they didn't. Just because Genesis doesn't mention Adam and Eve keeping the Sabbath doesn't mean they didn't. After all, the creation account is primarily about *God*, not what Adam and Eve did. This *focus on God* may mean that, in this narrative, what Adam and Eve did is not as *important* and, therefore, their Sabbath keeping or a command from God to keep the Sabbath is not mentioned.

It is incorrect to conclude from an absence of a command that a command didn't exist. The Genesis narratives are not *intended* to be a list of all the commands God gave to Adam and Eve. The stories are written with a very specific purpose in mind and that purpose constrains what is included and what is left out.

It is true that there is no command in Genesis 1-2 about Sabbath keeping. Again the *focus* is about origins (*Which is what the book of Genesis is about*). *How the Sabbath was created!* What we do have is an example. ***This example provides evidence that the Sabbath should be kept!*** There is no command in Genesis 1-3 proscribing murder. But we *don't* conclude from this that murder is ok. When we get to the story of Cain killing Abel, we know it is wrong because it doesn't fit with God's example. God told Cain before he slew Abel "Sin lieth at the door" (Gen 4:7). The Knowledge of sin was known among our first parents.

We have God's example as the life-giver in Genesis 1-2; therefore we should follow that norm and promote life. In the same way, we have God's example as the Sabbath-creator and observer. God was never physically tired so he had no actual need to rest (Isa 40:28). So why did God rest? He rested *as an example for man to follow!* Jesus said, "The Sabbath was made for *man*, and not man for the Sabbath." (Mark 2:27). The Sabbath was made for man's benefit. God showed man that one day in 7 we must rest, and worship God, and re-energized our physical as well as our spiritual batteries and be refreshed and have a "feast" for the Sabbath was a feast day! (Lev 23:2). *In the same way, we follow God's example in not murdering, Christians should follow God's example in Sabbath-keeping.*

We ought to be aware that the feasts were in existence long *before* the Law was given at Mount Sinai. These are universal in nature, and the time will come when all of the mankind will keep them when Jesus Christ steps back on this earth. They remain today, therefore, as symbols for us to follow as Christians. Let us therefore keep the feasts with these truths in mind, "*even these are MY FEASTS.*" (Lev 23:2).

Argument:

If these feast days were observed before Sinai, then why are they called the "Feast of the Jews" in the Gospel of John?

Answer: In the Gospel of John especially, we read of the "Jews Passover" and the "Jews Feast of Tabernacles" and the "Jews Preparation Day,"? See John 7:2; 11:55; 19:42. Why does John use this language?

Were the Feast Days Observed in the book of Genesis?

“John’s concern [was] to *inform* the reader that he is referring to the Passover of the Jews suggests that, to use Joachim Jeremiah’s words ‘He obviously *distinguishes* the Jewish Passover from the Christian’” (God’s Festivals, Biacchiocchi, p.73, emphasis added). That’s all John was doing, he was making a *clear distinction* between the *Jews Passover* and *Feast of Tabernacles* from the *Christian Passover* and *Feast of Tabernacles*.

Christ was “Our Passover,” Our “First fruits,” Our “Atonement,” and he “Tabernacled” among us, (see 1 Corinth 5:7; 15:20; 1 John 2:2; John 1:14). To the Jews, because they rejected Christ, He was none of those things. So John had to make a clear distinction between the two.

For the New Testament church, “The keeping of the festivals was taken for granted” (ibid, p.72). These festivals were *never up for discussion* of being done away. So this means that there was a “*Christian Preparation Day*,” A “*Christian Passover*,” A “*Christian Feast of Tabernacles*” Etc....

This source agrees, “...the expression ‘Jews’ in the fourth Gospel generally conveys the IDEA OF CONTRAST to the Disciples of Christ (for St. John vii.15)...” (Alfred Edersheim, Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, p.309, emphasis added).

So these were called the “feast of the Jews” *not* because these feasts were *strictly* for the Jews, but to make a clear *distinction* between the *Christian* celebration of the Passover and the other feasts, and the way the *Jews* celebrated the feasts. The Passover and other feasts were still *God’s Feasts* that originated with him, and he gave them to Israel, *not* just the Jews to celebrate, as he gave them to others, like Noah and Adam. When these feasts were revealed to *Moses all 12 tribes celebrated them*, not just the Jews *who are but one tribe* of the 12. And at that time in the book of Exodus it was *not* called the “Jews Passover” it was the “LORDS Passover” (Ex 12:11, 27, Lev 23:5). It was always *God’s* feasts and always will be, as God puts it, “*even these are MY FEASTS.*” (Lev 23:2).