

April 1, 2009

Dear Brethren,

Once again we find ourselves at the beginning of another cycle of feast days. Have we ever stopped and wondered why we are keeping them? Perhaps we have; maybe we even focused on them this year as the realization of the impending self-evaluation and de-leavening entered our minds.

Some of us have been observing these days *for decades* and as human nature would have it, we may approach these days not at the top of our game. This is a tendency that we cannot afford to have take root, because the consequences can be devastating.

Rather, we must recognize that these days are anchor points in our Christian navigation through this world. We know that they will be here from year to year and will keep us tied to the truth through obedience of God’s Word and the understanding of His Plan of Salvation.

The feast days were designed this way on purpose by the Creator of mankind for His creation—for man. God knows exactly how we tick and precisely what we need. He knows that we need a yearly reminder of these days. This is for our own good. It keeps us in tune with what God is working out here on earth and affords us opportunities to learn even more about His Plan.

The feast days are memorials. They bring to memory events that have already taken place or ones that will occur in the very near future. The feast days preserve our memory... “Lest we forget—lest we forget!” This saying was popularized in Rudyard Kipling’s “Recessional” in the late 19th century. In the poem, the refrain echoes these words as a warning to remember God’s role in our life and that we should not let our egotism blind us to this fact, as it did many of those who came before us. In much the same vein, each time we keep a feast, it brings to memory God’s role in our life as well as the lives of all those who have ever lived.

Going back in recent history, we have seen what happens when some decide to stop observing the feast days. Some who kept “the feasts of the Lord” (Leviticus 23:2) *for decades* and claimed that they would never go back and celebrate any pagan festivals, were doing just that within months of ceasing to keep the commanded feast days of God.

Do we see the connection and correlation? It is not that we have kept all of the feast days *for decades*, but the fact that we are committed to observe them this year and next and each subsequent one. By faithfully and properly keeping these days now and in the future, we will continue to remember the meaning they have for us. It also affords us the opportunity to learn more about the wonderful Plan that God has for all of mankind.

Very soon we will have the duty and privilege to keep the Passover. It is very important that we observe this memorial:

“For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’ In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.’ For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes” (1 Corinthians 11:23–26).

It is so important to keep Passover and the symbols mentioned above—as well as the foot-washing (John 13:1–17)—that God provided a second day to keep Passover (Numbers 9:9–12) if circumstances beyond our control contributed to us not being able to keep it at the appointed time. There are no such provisions for any of the other commanded feasts of God. If it is indeed this crucial and essential, should we not make every effort to observe and prepare for this day properly?

We are admonished, before this most solemn time of the year, to examine ourselves so that we do not partake of the Passover unworthily:

“Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup” (1 Corinthians 11:27–28).

It is imperative that we test our past actions for compliance with God’s law. We do this in order that we can prove to ourselves that we are doing ALL that we should be doing in the way that we should be doing it.

If we find that we are coming up short, which we will more than likely discover, then it is necessary that we repent and seek God’s forgiveness. Failing to do this, can put us in the category Paul mentions above, of taking the symbols of Passover in an “unworthy manner” or ungodly way. This is something that we will have to stand before God and answer for, and it is not a position that we want to face if our answer is going to be that we disrespected the sacrifice of His Son (compare 1 Corinthians 11:29).

To say the least—this is a day that we should approach with all due diligence. We need to ask God to help and He will. We can successfully do what we are supposed to by the power of God in us—there is no doubt about that.

Next, right on the heels of the Passover, we have our next memorial, the Days of Unleavened Bread:

“Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days. And no leavened bread shall be seen among you, nor shall leaven be seen among you in all your quarters. And you shall tell your son in that day, saying, ‘This is done because of what the LORD did for me when I came up from Egypt.’ It shall be as a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the Lord’s law may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand the LORD has brought you out of Egypt” (Exodus 13:7–10).

Leavening, a type of sin, is to be put completely out of our home. In the same way, these days remind us of the need to put sin entirely out of our life. Our walk is one of overcoming sin and leaving behind what we once were. This process began in earnest with our baptism (which is also tied to the feast of the Days of Unleavened Bread):

“Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin” (Romans 6:4–6).

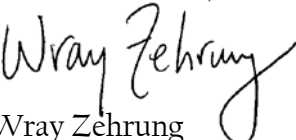
Sin is always knocking at the door and seeking to creep back into our lives if we give it half a chance. The key then is to then replace sin with righteousness and our carnal man with Christ! We do this through the knowledge and Word of God and our willingness to let Jesus Christ live in us and direct our paths (Colossians 3:9–10; Romans 7:14, 25).

What an awesome Plan that is so magnificently designed! At every turn it is overflowing with meaning and purpose. The more that we study and keep the feasts of God, the more we understand them. And the more that we understand them, the more we see how perfectly it all fits together.

As the feasts near, let us be conscientious in studying the relevant Scriptures and passages; use our booklet on God’s Spring Holy Days as a guide; and devote time to prepare and really engage ourselves in what God has commanded.

We have a great opportunity to be a part of this now and in the future. Do not forget... but remember!

In Christian love,


Wray Zehrung