

First Century Fellowship
Ministry
A Biblical Church of God

Foundation Series

Setting Our Biblical Foundation On THE Rock

Preface

Is there something missing in your worship and understanding of God? Do you have questions that go unanswered in your Sunday Church? Is scripture in fact contrary to what you were taught or led to believe? You are being called by your Creator that something is missing and you are curious to find out the truth, His Truth. “No one can come to Me unless The Father, Who sent Me, draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.”- John 6:44

First Century Fellowship is a group of believers from many backgrounds and denominations, who like you, were missing something in our worship of Our God. Granted, we all believe that Jesus Christ is The Son of God and He died for the remission of our sins. But we too felt we were not worshipping Our God in the manner He commanded in His Bible.

Today’s Christianity is a long way from Christ’s original Church founded on Pentecost in the 1st Century. Like the Pharisees in Matthew 15, traditions are more important to churches than the Word of God. As Christ said in Matthew 15:9, “But in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”

“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth.”- John 4:24. It is vital that we worship God in spirit and in truth. Members of First Century Fellowship are dedicated to keeping God’s Sabbaths and Holy Days as He commanded us to do in His written Word.

“Ask, and it shall be given to you. Seek and you shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened to you.”- Matthew 7:7. As you begin or continue in your search for God’s Truth and creation purpose for your life, seek His wisdom, guidance and way of life found in His written inspired word.

This 7-part Foundation Series will provide a basic foundation for understanding on several topics from The Holy Bible to God’s Plan for Mankind. As you open your mind and heart, our prayer is that God reveals to you His truth and plan for your life. As you learn and grow in the image of His Son, may His peace surround you as you follow in the footsteps of Our Savior, Jesus Christ.

An Introduction

Our Journey

Welcome to our Foundation Series and thank you for inquiring of God's truth. You may not understand now but it probably wasn't your idea. God has to lead you. Like you, most of us here have come from other churches and forms of religion and worship. We were as confused and uneasy with their teachings as many of you.

We grew up believing what our pastors, priests, nuns, parents and grandparents told us. We never questioned them. Why would we? Unfortunately for us, that's probably the way our parents and grandparents learned also.

We always knew we were Christians. We believed in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ but were uncomfortable in the way and manner these churches worshipped God. Some would claim to be Bible believing and Bible-based churches but when asked why they did certain things contrary to the Bible, we received what seemed a stock, non-biblical answer. "Well, we choose to honor Jesus this way" or "That's from the Old Testament which is no longer relevant" or the best untruth of all, "The law was done away with. It was nailed to the cross with Jesus." All are wrong answers, as you will see.

Our founding group members were initially introduced to the truth of God by a man who had been with a Worldwide Church of God group in south Florida. Most of us had never heard of the Worldwide Church of God, but as we prayed and listened to the teachings we noticed our eyes being opened to God's truth more and more each week.

We learned and grew in God's truth, grace and knowledge. We studied the entire Holy Bible, not just the New Testament. You cannot learn or know God's truth with only part of the Bible. As

you will see, you cannot fully understand the New Testament without the Old Testament.

Our growth for the first three or four years was tremendous. We found the value of honoring God's Sabbaths, and we honored God's Holy Days and learned of their importance. We were baptized into God's family and we all understood the significance and responsibilities associated with it.

Because of this and knowledge we had received we began to notice a slowdown in our spiritual growth. We didn't speak of it at first but, as we later discussed, we all felt it. A few months went on and it was becoming obvious our group leader was falling away. He made several poor decisions and when questioned, he would not address it or would belittle the person who asked.

Other events happened that led to nine of us leaving the group. We met the next Sabbath knowing only it was Sabbath and we needed to be together. We prayed earnestly asking for God's guidance. We talked of what we had learned and now believed with all our heart and how important it was for us to stay in God's truth. All of us realized because of what we had learned to this point we could never go back to "mainstream" religion.

We prayed for God's guidance and He certainly has done just that. Each week on Sabbath, we would assemble for a Bible study. Individually, during the week we would look into other Church of God groups on the internet. None of us felt competent to lead a group. We felt we needed a leader. As we'll see, God seemed to have a different plan.

To give us an identity, we needed a name. One thing was sure, we wanted to be a Church of God. Part of our original study was to get back to the beginning. How did the apostle's teach Christianity? The pure, undefiled truth that was given to them by Jesus and God's Holy Spirit. How did we end up, 2000 years later, with so many "Christian religions? They all cannot be right. We prayed about it and within a couple of weeks at Sabbath study,

we all had been led to the same name, *First Century Fellowship Ministry, A Biblical Church of God*.

First Century is obvious, the beginning. Fellowship because many of the gentile congregations were fellowship meetings in private homes. Fellowshiping, as you will see when continuing on, is very important.

Because of our former leaders prior affiliation with Worldwide Church of God (WCG), we began to look there. We found it broke up and there were "splinter groups" around the country. We began to search these groups and discovered there were quite a few.

One of the things we did was research the history of WCG. We wanted to know how it came about, the core beliefs and why it broke up. From our limited experience, it seemed odd God would let a group that had and taught so much of His truth fail.

Through our research, we were able to learn so much about this church. This is a short summary of WCG to better understand our situation. For a long time it was totally dedicated to God's truth. Its founder, Herbert Armstrong, was blessed to be able to reveal God's truth and lead this group. As with most human-led endeavors, pride entered into the picture. Mr. Armstrong put people in charge he thought he could trust to lead this church. Internal politics, different agenda's and a very rigid hierarchical leadership style, coupled with the segregation of Mr. Armstrong and his influence in the church, led to its failure.

Each Sabbath, we would have Bible Study and pray for God's guidance for our group. We researched the doctrines of more than a dozen WCG splinter groups. Most had the basic core beliefs intact from WCG. A couple appeared to have been absorbed into mainstream beliefs and strayed from the truth once revealed and a couple adopted the rigid hierarchical structure of WCG, along with its related problems.

As we continued to meet we began to use sermons from some of these groups. We prayed continually for God's guidance and discernment. When we first got together no one saw things developing the way they did, and have.

Two members were led to present sermons from these other groups. They would pray and research individually and present the studies on Sabbath. Each week these studies would complement one another. Topic, direction and spiritual guidance blended almost seamlessly. They have become the defacto group leaders. We all continue to pray for guidance from God and He has been leading us each week since we've been together.

One message received by all members, and we have spoken of this often, is we are to remain separate and apart, but we are to continue searching for God's truth and take the best these other groups have to offer. Again, through prayer and God's guidance, we have gone through, so to speak, a number of these splinter groups and continue to follow as God leads us.

God definitely has THE plan. We began to wonder about our place in the Body of Christ. Scripture tells us how the entire body has to fit together with all parts working together. We were not really seeing or understanding our place in it. After all, we have only been in God's truth for a relatively short time. What could we have to offer? Again, God has the plan.

One of our founding members has a doctoral degree in education and has an educational consulting business. She had done some Bible Studies for the kids in our group. On Sabbath, we try to clarify things in our search for truth. We discussed how, no matter what church you attend or see, the members are all older people. Why don't we see pre-teens and teens? It would seem we have a similar problem that many in industry have had; we do not properly address and train our replacements. Today's kids are our replacements.

As a result, we have been able to develop and with the help of others, continue to develop ways to teach the kids God's word. It has been reviewed and accepted by the Christian Biblical Church of God (CBCG) group and can be accessed through their website. We are now doing studies based on CBCG sermons that are being made into studies and worksheets for pre-teen and teens. Pam has had positive feedback from a number of homeschooling parents about these resources. She is now developing Study Packs for God's Holy Days.

It appears God still has more for us to do. A couple of us have experience as law enforcement trainers. One thing we learned is, To Teach Is To Learn Twice. We had an opportunity to share truth with a Haitian church in a neighboring city. Initially it was thought we were getting ourselves in over our heads. After praying about it, a lot, God lead us to where we felt confident doing it. He led us to numerous Church of God sites where we could research and compare their information and from there, discern His truth. The study you have here is part of the result of that experience. God led us to this information and guided us through the process of reading, understanding and discerning His truth from all of this.

Sometimes we will get a call or speak to someone about our group and our beliefs. We try our best to enlighten them but have found they think they know God's truth but it seems to fall back to mainstream church teachings every time. When we would invite them to our Bible study, many times you could see how uncomfortable they were.

We have started directing people to our website to review what you have in your hands, *The Foundation Series*. It has made a difference. Now when we speak to them it is more for further clarification of a point, rather than total confusion from sitting in on a Bible study that is beyond their current level of understanding.

Our prayer for you is that you are finally able to find the truth of God as a result of God's effort through us. He has certainly led us and guided us for nearly nine years. He has been the God we were all searching for all these years. He's been here all the time.

These gifts He has given us, first His truth, then the Kidz Korner teachings from Him through us, and these Foundation Studies. He has guided us in producing these things so others being called now to search for truth may have an easier path and understanding.

All of us here are from different parts of the country and world. All of us have been searching for truth for a long time, uncomfortable in the mainstream religions.

We haven't always been in a Church of God. Tragically, some of us have had years with little or no thoughts of God. We have also learned that is part of His plan for us. He has called us. He will lead us. He loves us and knows what it takes to bring His plan to fruition. It would seem He has called us now because now He knows we are ready to receive it.

All of the material in this study and on our website is from God, not any one of us. He has led us to it. He has given us discernment and ability to assemble it so that others like us can begin to grow in His grace and knowledge. We are truly grateful for this task and humbled by it.

First Century Fellowship Ministry

A Biblical Church of God

Naples, Florida

Firstcenturyfellowship.org

Setting Our Biblical Foundation on THE Rock

Part 1 THE HOLY BIBLE

INTRODUCTION

When we start down the path to seek the truth and knowledge of our Christian faith we generally come with some, many probably, pre-conceived ideas, thoughts and notions on what Christianity really is. They have come from what we have heard, what friends have said, what we have learned from churches we have attended and from the world in general.

We need to start off by setting the record straight. If you are here, you did not do it of your own accord. You have been called by God the Father. You did not start off one morning saying, "I think it's time to get right with God." God has set out by revealing to you that you need Him. He initiates the call, He begins by bringing you to that knowledge.

Jesus said, "No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who has sent Me, draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day."
(John 6:44).

He also tells us, "For many are called, but few are chosen."
(Matthew 22:14).

Why has He made these seemingly contradictory statements? Because He knows He has created us with *independent free moral agency*. We have been given the right to choose. Even though we are called by the Father, we can chose to respond, respond half-heartedly (luke warm) or not respond at all. That's why He notes, "... few are chosen."

When you seek truth and knowledge in the Word there are several basic things to understand. You need to believe, repent of your sins, be baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. We

will address each of these. All vitally important to understand. (We will go over these in more detail later.)

If you want to continue on this journey, this coming to God if you will, you need to do some "soul searching". Pray about this path you are on. Ask yourself, "What am I looking for? What do I desire to learn from this?" Pray before you begin and ask for His guidance. Pray that His plan be revealed. Do not be disappointed if you do not get an earth shattering response immediately. God reveals things to us as we develop the ability to handle it.

Are you willing to believe;

That He really exists? He has always existed and will always exist.

That He has complete authority over your life. This is important.

When asked by the disciple's what they must do to do the works of God, Jesus said,

"This is the work of God that you believe in Him Whom He has sent." (John 6:29).

You must believe.

This is where faith comes in. We have to have faith that He is. We should be able to look around and see His glory in His creation and believe. Most cannot. Faith is what we must have to please God. We must have faith and believe that He is.

"Now without faith it is impossible to please God. For it is mandatory for the one who comes to God to believe that He exists, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." (Hebrews 11:6).

We have to get away from what we believe or what others say and rely on the Word.

When we believe in God we are to believe in the God Family.
Jesus tells us,

“Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in Me. ... I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.”
(John 14:1, 6).

Belief in God is belief in Jesus Christ.

Let us move along to God’s word, His guidebook, His instruction manual for us. We need to understand how His word originated and has been preserved.

THE BIBLE-GOD’S WORD

In praying about this series what has been revealed is to start with the Word of God. Good place. Where exactly do we find that? Let’s start off by noting that God is revealed all around us. He is the Creator God. He is the Creator and Sustainer of everything that was made.

“All things came into being through Him, and not even one thing that was created came into being without Him.”
(John 1:3).

Because of this truth we should know Him, but we do not.

As we saw above, we must have faith and believe God. We must have confidence that what His word, the Holy Bible, says is faithful and true, which it is. How can we be sure that what we read now is a true and faithful version of His original writings? That is what this section will show.

Also, you must let His word interpret and define His word. Let the Bible interpret itself. No one scripture should be taken on its own to set a doctrine or belief. The Bible displays a unity of scripture, the Old and New Testaments comprise the complete

Bible. One cannot stand and be properly understood without the other.

Beginning with Moses it took a span of approximately 1500 years to complete the entire Bible. More than forty authors, chosen and inspired by God writing as He directed them. The apostle Peter acknowledged,

“We also possess the confirmed prophetic Word to which you do well to pay attention, as to the light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts; Knowing this first, that no prophesy of Scripture originated as anyone's own private interpretation; Because prophesy was not brought at any time by human will, but the holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

(2 Peter 1:19-21).

A very unique part of the Holy Bible is its accuracy and how it has been preserved over the past 3800 years. It has been protected and preserved by the chosen of God.

The Old Testament: Most of the Old Testament, the scripture as it is referred to in the New Testament, was written in the Hebrew language. The first five books of the Old Testament were written by Moses who was a Levite. He wrote what God, the Word, had spoken to him and the children of Israel. He personally met with God and wrote the words God spoke to him. He wrote nothing of his own. He recorded the words God commanded him to write. He recorded God's Law. From the death of Moses, God transferred the Law to the Aaronic priests, who were Levites, to safeguard and preserve His word.

Ezra and the Great Assembly canonized the scriptures of the Old Testament and continued to have the Aaronic priesthood protect and preserve it. Faithful copies were made as needed by the priests and Levites for teaching and the temple readings.

Other books of the Old Testament were written by priest like Samuel, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, all descendants of Aaron. Samuel records that these books were to be "laid up before the Lord". (1 Samuel 10:25).

Books or psalms written by kings who were not Levites such as King David and Solomon, who were from the tribe of Judah, were submitted to the priests to be laid up before the Lord.

"Then on that day David first delivered this psalm into the hand of Asaph and his brethren in order to thank the Lord."
(1 Chronicles 16:7).

This process insured important accounts would be written down and preserved. They would eventually become part of the prophets, the Psalms and historical writings.

The high priest Ezra, and the priests and Levites composing the Great Assembly, completed final editing and canonization of the Old Testament Scriptures in the late fifth century B.C.

From the time of Moses God used the Aaronic priests as writers, editors and custodians of His Holy Scripture. This continuity insured accurate, faithful and true renditions of His Word by His priests.

As originally canonized there are 22 books in the Old Testament set forth in three distinct divisions, The Law, the Prophets and the Writings (or Psalms).

The 39 books of the Old Testament we are most familiar with, do comprise the entire Old Testament. The difference is in the numbering sequence between the 39 books and the original 22 books in how Ezra grouped and counted them for the three part division of the Old Testament. (See Attachment: The Order of the Original 22 Books of the Old Testament).

The original change occurred during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-247 B.C.) in Alexandria, Egypt in the third century B.C. when he had the Old Testament Scriptures translated from the original Hebrew into Greek. This translation is called the Septuagint, from the Latin, meaning seventy. It is

commonly referred to by the Roman numerals *LXX*, for seventy as it was supposed to have been translated by seventy Jewish scholars. Hellenistic Jew's later added an additional 14 books, called Apocrypha (meaning, of doubtful origin) and added to the *LXX* bringing the total number of books to 53.

Jerome, in the fourth century A.D., translated the Bible into Latin. This version is known as the Latin Vulgate. Even though he acknowledged the correct order and divisions of the original text as 22, he chose to follow the order of the *LXX* thereby subverting the God inspired unity of the Scriptures, Old and New Testaments.

The number 22 is easily verified in many historical texts up to the fourth century.

Josephus in his book, *Antiquities of the Jews*, in the first century states, "We do not have a countless number of books, discordant and arranged against each other; but only two and twenty books, containing the history of every age, which are justly accredited as divine."

Dr. Ernest L. Martin, a biblical scholar and historian recorded, "There were only 22 books to the standard Old Testament. This numbering can be traced back at least two hundred years before the time of Christ. It is found in the book of Jubilees. Thus, as early as the year 150 B.C., it was common for Jews to reckon the Old Testament books as being 22 in number." (Martin, *Restoring the Original Bible*, p. 57).

We see that Jesus was aware of the three part division of the Old Testament,

"And He said to them, "These are the words that I spoke to you when I was yet with you, that all these things which were written concerning Me in the Law of Moses and in the Prophets and in the Psalms must be fulfilled. Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, "According as it is written, it was necessary for the Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day."

(Luke 24:44-46).

Notice what is recorded, "He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures," He is speaking of the Old Testament only. The New Testament had not been written.

The New Testament: You cannot understand the Old Testament without the New Testament.

The New Testament was faithfully and accurately written by the apostles of Jesus Christ in Koine Greek. Its 27 books were canonized by John, Peter and Paul and after the Apostolic age, around 125 A.D., was preserved by the Greek speaking church. This preserved text is called the Byzantine text. In 1550 A.D. this text, then known as the Stephen's text, was used to translate the New Testament from the original Greek into English which was then used for the King James Version of 1611.

"William Tyndale (1494-1536) was the first person to translate the Bible into English from its original Greek and Hebrew and the first to print the Bible in English, which he did in exile. Giving the laity access to the Word of God outraged the clerical establishment in England: he was condemned, hunted, and eventually murdered. However, his masterly translation formed the basis of all English Bibles-including the 'King James Bible,' many of whose finest passages were taken unchanged, though unacknowledged, from Tyndale's work." (*The Holy Bible In Its Original Order-A Faithful Version with Commentary*, Commentary, Chapter One, p. 8).

Tyndale's condemnation, persecution and eventual murder shows the established church did not want privately owned copies of the Holy Bible, and its associated truths, in the hands of those they were "serving". When you have Biblical truth you are a threat to them and their authority.

"Therefore Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in Him, "If you continue in my word, you are truly My disciples, and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free."

(John 8: 31-32).

This is not the only situation like this. Martin Luther suffered at the hands of the Catholic Church for trying to get them to acknowledge truth.

“But you shall be delivered up even by parent and brothers and relatives and friends, and they shall put some of you to death; And you shall be hated by all because of My name.”
(Luke 21:16-17).

“And because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. Which one of you can convict Me of sin? But if I speak the truth, why don't you believe Me? The one who is of God hears the words of God. For this reason you do not hear, because you are not of God.”
(John 8:45-47).

There have been many Saints throughout history who have protected, preserved and transmitted the true word of God. Through their faithful and selfless service to our Creator God they allowed us to realize His truth.

As we have seen, we can have faith that there are faithful translations of God's Holy Word. However, we must be careful that in the newer translations that accuracy and truth has been retained. Some newer translations have changed words, left out some passages and inserted words or verses to justify a position. Some acknowledged “changes” are:

Acts 12:4; “And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after *Easter* to bring him forth to the people.”

"*Easter*" in this passage of a later KJV is incorrect. The true translation should be, "... intending after *Passover* to bring ..."

1 John 5:7; "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one."

This is an addition placed into the text of later KJV's that *does not* appear in the earliest Greek manuscripts. It also does not appear in Jerome's early Latin translation, the Vulgate. It does appear in later Greek manuscripts that were translated from the Latin tradition dated around the twelfth century A.D. The Old Latin is the only version to include it. It is an addition to justify the trinity. The later KJV, NKJV, Amplified Bible, NIV, NASB and Cephher all contain this addition or a variation of it. The correct translation, based on original Greek transcripts should be, "And it is the Spirit that bears witness because the Spirit is truth." (The Holy Bible In Its Original Order (AFV)).

Luke 11:2-4; "2. And He said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be you name. Your kingdom come. 3. 'Give us each day our daily bread. 4. 'And forgive us our sins, For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indepted to us. And lead us not into temptation."

This verse is from the NASB. It also appears this way in the ASV, NIV and the ESV. It is an incorrect translation. The correct translation from the KJV is, (note the differences-underlined),

"2. And He said unto them, "When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. 3. Give us day by day our daily bread. 4. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indepted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from (the) evil (one)"

This correct version also appears this way in NKJV, the Amplified Bible and AFV.

What these few passages show is we also must be careful in what we use to read and understand God's truth. The KJV, NKJV, the Amplified Bible and the Holy Bible In Its Original Order (AFV) are consistently more accurate translations. Others may be easier to read for some but we must be aware of errors and in some cases, deliberate attempts to subvert the truth.

"For everyone who practices evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, so that his works may not be exposed; But the one who practices the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be manifested, that they have been accomplished by the power of God." (John 3:21-22).

"But the hour is coming and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father is indeed seeking those who worship Him in this manner." (John 4:23-24).

An interesting note, as originally canonized there are 22 books in the Old Testament in three divisions. There are 27 canonized books in the New Testament set in four divisions. This gives 49 total books set in seven divisions making up the complete Bible. Seven is the number of completeness and perfection and is directly tied to creation. 49 is 7×7 and there are 7 division in the original canonized texts.

In more "modern" translations they mark the Old Testament with 39 books with no division and the New Testament with 27 books with no divisions. This total is set at 66 books. 6 is the number of man and human weakness. Man was created on the sixth day. There are 6 days of work. "666" is noted in Revelation

13:8, as the mark and number of the Beast. It shows the inadequacies of man's rule.

"Here is wisdom. Let the one who has understanding count the number of the beast; for it is man's number and his number is 666."

(Revelation 13:18) Just a thought!

Please remember these passages;

"Therefore, whoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever shall practice and teach them, this one shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

(Matthew 5:19).

"For I jointly testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book, that if anyone adds to these things, God shall add to him the plagues that are written in this book. And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the book of life, and from the holy city, and from the things that are written in this book."

(Revelation 22:18-19).

The order of the original 22 Books of the Old Testament With Divisions

The Law:

1. Genesis
2. Exodus
3. Leviticus
4. Numbers
5. Deuteronomy

The Prophets:

6. Joshua/Judges
7. The Book of Kingdoms: (1 and 2 Samuel/1 and 2 Kings)
8. Isaiah
9. Jeremiah
10. Ezekiel
11. The Twelve: (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi)

The Writings (Psalms):

12. Psalms

13. Proverbs
14. Job
15. Song of Songs
16. Ruth
17. Lamentations
18. Ecclesiastes
19. Esther
20. Daniel
21. Ezra/Nehemiah
22. The Book of Chronicles: (1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles)

The Original Order of the Books of the Canonized New Testament-With Divisions

Gospels/Acts

- 1) Matthew
- 2) Mark
- 3) Luke
- 4) John
- 5) Acts of Apostles

General Epistles

- 6) James
- 7) 1 Peter
- 8) 2 Peter
- 9) 1 John
- 10) 2 John
- 11) 3 John
- 12) Jude

EPISTLES OF PAUL

- 13) Romans
- 14) 1 Corinthians
- 15) 2 Corinthians
- 16) Galatians

- 20) 1 Thessalonians
- 21) 2 Thessalonians
- 22) Hebrews
- 23) 1 Timothy

17) Ephesians
18) Philippians
19) Colossians

24) 2 Timothy
25) Titus
26) Philemon

REVELATION

27) The Book of the
Revelation of
Jesus Christ

Setting Our Biblical Foundation On THE Rock

Part 2

THE GOD FAMILY-NOT A TRINITY

Is the God Family a trinity as some would have you believe? If not, where did this belief come from? Why do so many believe in a trinity if it is not true? Is there Biblical and historic evidence to confirm this?

We know this is a controversial subject with many of the "Big Box" churches out there. Some will say it is a very complicated subject. We do not believe it is. Our source must always be Holy Scripture, the entire Bible and let it explain itself. "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints." (1 Corinthians 14:33). Would an all knowing and all loving God not provide us with the information we need to know Who He truly is? He did. It is in His written inspired word, The Holy Bible. He gives us all the information we need to know in all aspects of life. We must read and pay attention.

"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds might be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

(2 Corinthians 11:3).

We will show you the trinity doctrine was not part of the First Century Apostolic Church of God that was ordained on Pentecost. From the beginning, in Genesis and continuing on throughout the Bible, we are shown the God Family consists of Who we now know as the Father and His Son, These Two are the God Family. The Holy Spirit is the power of God and does His will. It is also imparted on believers as a gift of God by the laying on of hands

when they repent of their past sins and are baptized by immersion.

THE GOD FAMILY

The God Family is the Holy family of intelligent spirit beings Who are the Creators of all things in the heavens and the earth. There is one God composed of God the Father and God the Son, Who is also called "the Word" and "I AM". They watch over and sustain all of Their creation.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."
(Genesis 1:1).

"And God said, "Let us make man in our image, after Our likeness;"
(Genesis 1:26).

In this verse the original text, "And God said," Elohim is the word for God. It denotes the plural indicating God was more than one but not indicating at this point, how many. We learn that later on in John.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and not even one thing that was created came into being without Him." (John 1:1-3).

Moses asks God,

"..., Behold, when I come to the children of Israel, and shall say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they shall say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?" And God said to Moses, I AM THAT I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'
(Exodus 3:13-14).

We see this confirmed in other scripture as well.

“And that I might enlighten all as to what is the fellowship of the mystery that has been hidden from the ages in God, Who created all things by Jesus Christ.”
(Ephesians 3:9),

“Because by Him were all things created, the things in heaven and the things on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether they be thrones, or lordships, or principalities, or powers; All things were created by Him and for Him.”
(Colossians 1:16).

And we can see in Jesus’ words He was there with the Father in the beginning.

“And now Father, glorify Me with Your own self, with the glory that I had with You before the world existed.”
(John 17:5).

The Bible identifies two Beings, God and the Word in the Old Testament and God the Father and God the Son in the New Testament that make up the God Family.

We have shown a few places in the Bible where the God Family is defined. There are more than eighty places where the “1-2” of the Godhead are listed in the New Testament. (See attached document listing the Scriptures). Nowhere in the Bible does it list the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God or The Holy Ghost as being equal to God the Father or God the Son.

Let’s look at it from a slightly different angle, would any of the apostles who walked with and knew Jesus Christ dishonor God by not acknowledging ALL members of the God Family when they gave greetings? Not one gave a greeting that would set the Holy Spirit on the same level as God the Father and His Son. James, the half-brother of Jesus, John, Paul and Peter all acknowledge the God Family in the beginning of some of their epistles.

“James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes ...”

(James 1:1).

"That which we have seen and have heard we are reporting to you in order that you may also have fellowship with us; for the fellowship- indeed, our fellowship- is with the Father and with His own Son, Jesus Christ."

1 John 1:3).

"To all those who are in Rome, beloved by God, the saints: Grace and peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ."

(Romans 1:7).

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who according to His abundant mercy, has begotten us again unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

(1 Peter 1:3).

Listed are but a few examples. There are many more. Nowhere is the Holy Spirit listed as part of the God Family. If it was part of a triune godhead would the apostles ignore that fact? They would have had intimate and direct knowledge.

We have seen from Scripture that Jesus Christ is "the Word" and the Son of God. Jesus Himself acknowledges and reveals the Father.

"No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him."

(John 1:18).

We do not find this type of acknowledgement from Jesus regarding the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the power of God and does His will. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, God dwells in us.

“And the one who keeps His commandments is dwelling in Him, and He in him; and by this we know that He is dwelling in us: by the Spirit which He has given to us.”
(1 John 3: 24).

The Holy Spirit is the means used by God, the Father and Son, to impart His presence in our hearts. It is the power He uses to work with us.

We receive the gift Holy Spirit after we are baptized and have hands laid on us.

“Then Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”
(Acts 2:38).

It is the gift of God and allows us to understand His word and purpose for us. His Spirit is used to transform our lives from the sinful individuals we were before repentance to a new man or creation as we change our lives and submit to Gods will.

Mary was told by the angel Gabriel she would conceive and give birth to a son.

“But said to the angel, “How shall this be, since I have not had sexual relations with a man?” And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit shall come upon you and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you; and for this reason, the Holy One being begotten in you shall be called the Son of God.”
(Luke 1:34-35). (Emphasis added).

If the Holy Spirit was a separate and co-equal member of the Godhead and not the power of God, would not the Holy Spirit be the father of Jesus?

David, a man after Gods own heart, said when he was confessing his sins before God,

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Cast me not away from

Your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me."
(Psalm 51:10-11).

If the Holy Spirit was a separate but co-equal member of the God family could David have appealed directly to the Holy Spirit asking it not to depart from him?

THE ORIGIN OF THE TRINITY IN CHRISTIANITY

Let's start off by stating this simple fact. If there was a holy trinity, three co-equal beings making up the God Family why did not the apostles document it. Nowhere in the epistles of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John or Paul is it found.

Jesus gave the apostles a warning when they asked Him for a sign of His coming and the completion of the age.

"Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Be on guard, so that no one deceives you."
(Matthew 24:4).

They asked for a sign and what did Jesus do? He gave them a warning.

James and Jude, Jesus' half-brothers did not write about a trinity either. Jude did give us a warning verifying what Jesus had said earlier. "Beloved, when personally exerting all my diligence to write to you concerning the common salvation, I was compelled to write to you, exhorting you to fervently fight for the faith, which once for all time has been delivered to the saints." (Jude 3). He was referring to men who had crept into the church of God and would pervert the purity of the Gospel and the true knowledge spread by the apostle's. This is the knowledge which they learned firsthand and as was revealed to them by the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

The first recorded mention of a Christian trinity was by Tertullian (155-240 A.D.), a Christian author from Carthage (what

is now Tunisia) when he was attempting to describe the Godhead in the late second to early third century. This is more than 150 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus and after the death of the original apostles and most of their immediate followers. There was minimal talk or mention of it until the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. but bitter disputes arose regarding it at that time and it was not adopted. Later in the fourth century when the "Cappadocian Fathers", Basil, Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory Nazianzus finalized the concept for the Catholic (Universal) church and brought it forward introducing it at the Council of Constantinople in 381 A.D. where it was finally accepted as doctrine. (Catholic Encyclopedia vol.2)

Many who read the Bible and believe in the trinity use several scriptures to justify their belief. John 14:17; John 14:26; John 15:26; John 16:13, 14, are the most often used because they list the Holy Spirit as "he/him".

In the New Testament Greek the noun *pneuma*, and its forms, are used to describe the Holy Spirit. *Pneuma* is in the neuter gender. It does not convey the masculine gender onto the Holy Spirit. All Scripture reveals the Holy Spirit is not a person as the Father and Son, Who are always designated in the masculine gender. The Holy Spirit is not a person but the power used by the Father and the Son. (See attached, Forms of the Noun Pneuma). To illustrate we will use John 14:17. KJV:

"Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

Here we can see the masculine gender incorrectly used.

The correct translation should be, AFV:

"Even the Spirit of the truth, which the world cannot receive because it perceives it not, nor knows it; but you know it because it dwells with you and shall be within you."

This is a proper translation of the gender neutral noun *pneuma*. The other verses cited above will reflect the same meaning when

applied correctly. The Holy Spirit is not a person with a specific gender. It is the power of God used to do His will.

There is also one other verse commonly cited but it is a fabrication not seen in any early Greek manuscripts. It first appeared in the Latin text in the late fourth century. It was then included in the Latin Vulgate and then in early KJV bibles. 1 John 5:7 is the verse in question. KJV:

“For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one.”

As noted, this does not appear in any reliable early Greek text. The proper rendering of 1 John 5:7, AFV:

“And it is the Spirit that bears witness because the Spirit is truth.”

THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is revealed to be the power God uses to accomplish His work and His will. We have seen the Holy Spirit does not have a gender or a personality.

Jesus told His disciples that when He left He would send a *Comforter*,

“But when the Comforter has come, which I will send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of the truth, which proceeds from the Father, that one shall bear witness of Me.”

(John 15:26).

Through baptism God grants us, true believers, the gift of His Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit we share in Gods power and knowledge. His love and attitude. Upon repentance and baptism and this gift of the Holy Spirit we are to become a new creation, burying the old sinful man.

“I have been crucified with Christ, yet I live. Indeed, it is no longer I; but Christ lives in me. For the life that I am now living in the flesh, I live by faith-that very faith of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

(Galatians 2:20).

We know God because He has revealed Himself to us. His word is in His Holy Bible and its truth is revealed to us through His Holy Spirit. We have an all loving merciful God Who has given us all we need to live and prosper, if we care enough to ask Him to show us and look where He placed it.

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the Sons of God.”

(Romans 8:14).

The 1 – 2 of the Godhead

Several Apostle's Letter's/Epistle's begins with a tribute to Jesus Christ and

God the Father. No reference to Holy Spirit/Trinity

Matthew – 7:21; 10:32-33; 11:27***; 16:27; 17:5; 20:23; 26:39, 53, 63

Mark – 9:7; 14:36

Luke – 9:26; 10:22***; 22:42

John – 1:1-2, 18; 3:16, 18*, 35* 5:19, 20-23*, 26, 30; 6:37-40, 44, 57, 65; 7:29; 8:16,18, 26, 28, 29, 38, 42, 49, 53-55; 10:15, 17, 18, 25, 29, 30, 32, 36, 38; 11:42; 12:45, 49; 13:3; 14:1, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 20, 23, 24, 28**; 15:1, 9, 10, 15, 23, 24; 16:3, 5, 15, 23, 26, 27, 32; 17:1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 11*, 21-26*; 20:17, 21, 31

Acts – 4: 27, 30; 9: 20

James – 1:1

1 Peter – 1:3, 2:5; 4:11; 5:10

2 Peter – 1:1, 2, 17

1 John – 1:3, 7; 2:22, 23, 24; 4:14; 5:1, 9, 10, 11, 20

2 John – 3, 9

3 John –

Jude – 1; 4

Romans – 1:1-4, 7, 9, 16; 8:17, 32

1 Cor – 1:1, 3, 24; 8:6; 15:15, 24-28

2 Cor – 1:2; 2:14-17; 5:18-21; 12:19

Galatians – 1:1, 3, 15-16; 2:20; 4:4

Ephesians – 1:1- 3; 4:13; 5:5, 20

Philippians – 1:2, 8, 11; 2: 4-9, 11; 3:14, 20; 4:20, 21

Colossians – 1:2, 3, 10, 13, 15; 2:2, 9-11; 3:1, 17

1 Thes – 1:1, 3; 5:18

2 Thes – 1:1, 2, 12; 2:16

Hebrews – 1:1-3, 9

1 Timothy – 1:1, 2, 16, 17; 2:5

2 Timothy – 1:1, 2; 4:1

Titus – 1:1-4

Philemon – 1:3

Revelation – 1:1, 2, 6; 3:21; 7:10; 20:6; 21:22, 23; 22:1, 3

*If the Holy Spirit is co-equal why is there no mention of It?

**How are there 3 co-equal when Jesus considered God the Father to be Greater than Him?

***The Father and Son know One Another - No Holy Spirit mentioned - how can They be co-equal?

Forms of the Noun *Pneuma* Used in the Greek Text

pneuma = spirit

to pneuma = the spirit

to pneumatōs = the spirit

pneuma hagion = spirit holy

to hagion pneuma = the holy spirit

to hagion pneumatōs = the holy spirit

to pneuma to hagion = the spirit the holy

(Exegesis for the Translation of the Phrase "the Holy Spirit" as Antecedent in John 14, 15 and 16; Appendix K, A Faithful Version, The Holy Bible in its Original Order)

Setting Our Biblical Foundation On THE Rock

Part 3

BELIEF, FAITH AND REPENTANCE

As we learned in our study on The Holy Bible, we have been called by God. Remember though,

“For many are called, but few are chosen.”

(Matthew 22: 14)

It is up to us to proceed as God speaks to and leads each of us.

We have learned we can rely on God’s written inspired word, the Holy Bible which is comprised of the Old and the New Testaments. We also learned the God Family is comprised of God the Father and God the Son-Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is the power God uses to complete His work and not a co-equal part of the God Family. It is also a free gift to us after we are baptized and have hands laid on us. It is then we can grow more spiritually and as we learn and grow God reveals more to us.

So now we have a basic background and our foundation is growing, where do we go from here? We have to *believe* that God is. We have to have *faith* in Him and His word and we have to *repent* of our past sins. These steps will then lead us to Baptism and receiving the Holy Spirit.

Make sure this is what you want and desire. Once you take that step and begin understanding the truth and are baptized, spiritually, there is no turning back.

BELIEF and FAITH

This may be hard to understand. Not because it is difficult but because it is so basic you will be looking for more. One of the

most important parts of this journey you are setting out on is that you believe that God exists. Even though we can look around us and see evidence of Him everywhere we must truly believe He exists and is working with us.

“This is the work of God: that you believe in Him Whom He has sent.”
(John 6:29)

We have to believe in Jesus Christ. His sinless life, His scourging and crucifixion and His resurrection. We must also acknowledge that even though we are called by the Father, Jesus tells us,

“I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.”
(John 14:6).

There is no compromise in this. You must believe God, and Jesus Christ completely. That means realizing that Gods Laws and ordinances are still in force. His Holy Days and Sabbaths are still in force. They were not done away with nor were they just for the Jew’s. It cannot be, “Well, I get most of this but the Saturday thing, I don’t know, that’s not the way I understand it.” Or, “I really don’t think we are supposed to be keeping these Jewish days. We’re Christians.”

“And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘Concerning the appointed feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are My appointed feasts.’”
(Leviticus 23:1-2)

Notice what God said. “...the appointed feast of the LORD ...even these are My appointed feasts.” God plainly and directly tells Moses these are His, God’s feasts, not once but twice in the same verse. Not the Jews or Catholics or Muslims or mans. These are His feasts. Jesus Christ and the apostle’s and the first century church with the converted gentiles kept all of God’s feasts and holy days. This included the weekly Sabbath.

“And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because on it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.”

(Genesis 2:3)

“Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, a holy convocation. You shall not do any work. It is a Sabbath to the LORD in all your dwellings.”

(Leviticus 23:3)

“And I gave them My statutes and showed them My ordinances, which if a man do, he shall live in them. And also I gave them My Sabbath~~s~~ to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD Who sanctifies them.”

(Ezekiel 20:11-12)

Only God can sanctify, set apart and make holy. He sanctified the seventh day and if we obey His statutes and ordinances and keep His Sabbath~~s~~, He will sanctify us.

Following and keeping God’s holy days and Sabbaths and believing His word takes *faith*. We have to believe that He is and that He has set out a path for us to follow that will lead us to sanctification.

How does God define faith?

“Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the conviction of things not seen. For by this kind of faith the elders obtained a good report.

(Hebrews 11:1-2)

We are also told,

“Now without faith it is impossible to please God. For it is mandatory for the one who comes to God to believe that He exists, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

(Hebrews 11:6)

We have to believe in Him, God the Father and His Son-Jesus Christ. We have to believe they exist, that Their laws and ordinances are true and just. We have to believe enough to actually practice and honor Them not just agree they exist and leave it at that. We must be doers of the word.

“Then be doers of the Word, and not only hearers, deceiving your own selves.”

(James 1:22)

Just about everything we know about God comes from other sources. That is, other people, pastor's, minister's, priests and friends. Very few actually take time to know God or His written inspired word. We must personally get to know God. If you are here, He has probably called you. It is now your duty to proceed as directed by Him.

The elders noted in the Old Testament, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job, and Enoch all knew God personally and when called they acted on faith. The children of Israel also saw evidence of God firsthand during the Exodus. They heard from Him, saw His miracles and experienced His truths. We for the most part are dealing on faith, as did the elders. Faith in God and Jesus Christ. Faith in His written inspired word and His laws. This we must do so that we may be accepted by the Father.

As we noted above,

“And Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.”

(John 14:6)

The picture should be getting clearer. We have been called by God. We are realizing we need to believe Who Jesus truly is. He is *the way, the truth* and *the life*. Ok, good. What does that mean, exactly?

Jesus is *the Way*: It is through Him we reach the Father. He told us He has given us an example.

“For I have given you an example, to show that you also should do exactly as I have done to you.”

(John 13:15)

Jesus is *the Truth*: The revelation of God’s Truth is found through Jesus Christ.

(John 14:6, above) and;

“If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also. But from this time forward, you have known Him and have seen Him. The words that I speak to you, I do not speak from My own self; but the Father Himself, who dwells in Me, does the work. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; but if not, believe Me because of the works themselves.”

(John 14:7, 10-11)

You must believe Jesus is the Messiah, the Savior and God before and after He came to earth as the perfect sacrifice.

“That is why I said to you that you shall die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I AM, you shall die in your sins.”

(John 8:24)

REPENTANCE

After Jesus had been baptized by John the Baptist and had spent forty days in the wilderness being tempted by Satan, He came to Galilee to begin His ministry.

“Now after the imprisonment of John, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, “The time has been fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is near at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

(Mark 1:14-15)

What did we just read? “...repent and believe the gospel ...”. Gospel comes from a Greek word that means “good news”. And what is this good news? It is the good news about God, about His

Son, our Savior, about the forgiveness of our sins and that through Him, our intercessor, we have access to the Father.

Here is how we will go about accomplishing this.

"..."The word is near to you, in your mouth and in your heart." This is the word of faith that we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus Christ, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth one confesses unto salvation."

(Romans 10:8-10)

We must confess and believe in our hearts that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He was the sacrifice for the sins of all mankind. We must "talk the talk and walk the walk", so to speak.

Next thing-we have to recognize that we are sinners. God laid all the sins of mankind on Jesus Christ. Our sins killed Him.

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

(Romans 3:23)

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord."

(Romans 6:23)

When we realize we are sinners and confess with our mouth and believe in our hearts that Jesus Christ is Lord we are then on the road to acceptance and repentance.

Repentance is not saying "I'm sorry" and that's it. We have to be continually repentant and accept the fact we are sinners. True repentance is complete remorse and sorrow for your sins. We have previously learned that sin is the transgression of God's law and commandments.

True repentance begins when God the Father opens our mind, calls us, to understanding. When we repent to God, we are to confess our sins to Him and ask for His forgiveness and remission for them. True repentance will produce a change in our mind and

attitude. This process is called conversion and will result in our desire to change and live by every word of God.

We will find that even though we go through this process and eventually become baptized there will be times we slip. This is why we will find ourselves in a continuing state of repentance which results in our spiritual growth.

What we will discover is we want to live a new life in Christ, we have a new thought process and we will act differently than we have in the past. We will be motivated and guided by the Holy Spirit.

Setting Our Biblical Foundation On THE Rock

Part 4

REPENTANCE, BAPTISM and THE HOLY SPIRIT

REPENTANCE

The call for repentance actually started before Jesus Christ began His ministry. The prophets Isaiah and Malachi spoke of a person who would precede the Messiah and pave the way for Him.

“A voice is calling out in the wilderness, “Prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”
(Isaiah 40:3)

“Behold, I will send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. ...”
(Malachi 3:1)

John the Baptist told his followers to repent for the kingdom of heaven was at hand.

“Now in those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” For this is he who was spoken of by Isaiah the prophet...”
(Matthew 3:1-3)

“As it is written in the prophets: “Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who shall prepare Your way before You. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight His paths.’ ” John came baptizing in the wilderness, and preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And all those of

the country of Judea went out, and those of Jerusalem, and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins."
(Mark 1:2-5, see also Matthew 11:10 and Luke 7:27)

After Jesus had been baptized by John in the Jordan River, He spent 40 days in the wilderness fasting and being tempted by Satan. He came into Galilee to begin His ministry.

"Now after the imprisonment of John, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, "The time has been fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is near at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

(Mark 1:14-15; also Matthew 4:17)

"... repent and believe the gospel..." We have previously learned that *gospel* comes from a Greek word that means *good news*. The good news is about God the Father as revealed by His Son, Jesus, our Savior. It is about the forgiveness of our sins through the blood of Jesus and that, through Him, our intercessor, we have access to the Father.

So what is repentance? We touched on it previously but it requires a more detailed description. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines repentance as "regret for sin or wrongdoing." Wikipedia says, "The activity of reviewing one's actions and feeling contrition or regret for past wrongs. Today, it is generally seen as involving a commitment to personal change and to resolve to live a more responsible and humane life."

"*Repent*" has been used by fire and brimstone preachers to scare the heck out of their listeners thinking it would put "the fear of God" in them.

The apostle Paul when speaking to the church at Corinth and commenting on his previous writing, epistle, to them said godly sorrow produces repentance towards salvation.

"And so I rejoice-not because you were caused to sorrow, but because you sorrowed unto repentance; for you sorrowed in a godly

manner, so that you were not injured by us in any way. For sorrow unto repentance before God works out salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world works out death.”
(2 Corinthians 7:9-10’ see also 2 Samuel 12:13)

We can see that worldly repentance would be saying, “I’m sorry. I didn’t mean it.” The world is full of people who say they are sorry for things they have done. They really do not change and usually continue on in the same pattern of behavior. This is not the repentance God is looking for. Worldly repentance, “works out death” but “sorrow unto repentance *before God* works out salvation.”

To be truly repentant you must first come to realize you are a sinner. You must demonstrate remorse and sorrow for your sins. True repentance comes from your heart. You were born into sin, you have lived in sin and you will sin again. As a result of your sins (and mine) and the sins of the whole world, Jesus Christ was crucified. So what are we to do?

“Repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”
(Acts 2:38; see also Acts 3:19)

What we are being told is we need to repent, be baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. True baptism is much more than a symbolic gesture of your faith. It is a covenant pledge by you to God for the forgiveness of your sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is the beginning of the life of the “new” man and the end of the “old” sinful man. It is the beginning of your personal relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ in your new spiritual way of life. Repentance is the first step towards our new life and the hope of reconciliation with our God.

But first we must repent of our sins. So what sins are we talking about?

"Everyone who practices sin is also practicing lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness"

(1 John 3:4 AFV)

"Whoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."

(1 John 3:4 KJV)

So sin is the transgression or breaking of God's law. The best example would be the commandments of God. Although some misguided souls feel the Ten Commandments were nailed to the cross we see plainly that practicing sin is lawlessness. It would seem that to have sin we have to have law. No law-no sin!

"For the law works out wrath; because where no law is, there is no transgression."

(Romans 4:15)

Let's see, if there is no transgression, there can be no sin. There must be law for there to be sin. Remember what Jesus said!

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until the heaven and the earth shall pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the Law until everything has been fulfilled."

(Matthew 5:17-18)

"If you love Me, keep the commandments-namely, My commandments."

(John 14:15; see also John 14:21, 23; 15:10; 1 John 5:3)

Sin also separates us from God.

"But your iniquities have come between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear."

(Isaiah 59:2)

We get back to God by repenting of our sins, being baptized and receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38).

Hopefully, we now know what we are repenting of. True godly repentance will start with God leading us in that direction. You cannot invite Jesus into your life. But, you can be invited to have a personal relationship with God-through Jesus Christ.

“No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

(John 6:44, see also v65)

Acts 2:37 tells us it can start with being “pricked in the heart.” You realize, as we have noted above, we all had a hand in killing Christ. He had to die for our sins. The sins of the whole world. We have sinned and we are sinners. We must develop a deep sorrow, more than “I’m sorry, God.” The point is to completely change your life, your mind and your attitude. A complete change in your way of life. You must resolve in your heart that you can no longer go on with your sinful way of life. Romans 2:4 tells us it is God’s graciousness that leads us to repentance. (See 2 Peter 3:9; Romans 3:25; Ephesians 1:7).

True Godly sorrow means we understand that our sinful unrepentant life will lead to death. You realize your sinful life also contributed to Christ’s death. His blood is what allows for the cleansing of our sins.

“However, if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, then we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin.”

(1 John 1:7; also Romans 5:9)

When we repent we must humbly confess our sins to God the Father and ask Him for His forgiveness and the remission of those sins. Only by genuinely seeking repentance, being humble and sincere, will you actually receive repentance from God Who will blot out our sins and forget them.

"If we confess our own sins, He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

(1 John 1:9; also Isaiah 43:25-26; Psalm 32:5; 86:5; 103:12)

As a matter of fact, every time we approach God in prayer we must do it with a humble and repentant attitude. We must continually demonstrate our repentant attitude and the fervent desire to be rid of the "old" man/self. Thus, repentance becomes an ongoing and continuous process.

When John the Baptist saw the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptisms he spoke to them saying,

"You brood of vipers, who has forewarned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore, produce fruits worthy of repentance;"

(Matthew 3:7-8; also 12:34; Luke 3:7-9)

He told them to, "produce fruits worthy of repentance", indicating an ongoing process not just, "sorry". (They did neither, by the way). The other indication that it is an ongoing process is He knows, and we should also, that we will slip from time to time. By our continuing repentant and humble attitude we approach Him with humility requesting forgiveness, He will forgive our transgressions.

We show God we are ready to keep His commandments because we truly love and fear Him.

We have learned we must *believe, repent* and be *baptized*. Believe that God is. Believe in the sacrifice and blood of Jesus Christ for the remission of our sins. Repent of and change our sinful way and life and live in a more spiritual way. Talk the talk and walk the walk! (Note: for an example of true repentance read David's plea to God in Psalms 32:1-11 and 51:1-19).

BAPTISM

You have been called by God the Father to follow His Son, Jesus Christ, John 6:44. You have repented of your sins and prayed about wanting to grow in your relationship with God. Your next step is baptism. This is a most wonderful gift but also probably the most critical decisions you are going to make. There are still important matters you must fully understand.

Many people during times of stress or hardship will turn to God for all the right reasons. They seek Him, read and study His written inspired word, become baptized and later when their life is running better end up slowly turning away from God. We want you to fully understand the significance of baptism, its promises and implications for your present and eternal life.

Baptism is not a sprinkling of water on the head of an infant who has no understanding of its true biblical significance. It is more than a ceremonial occurrence that symbolically joins us to Christ. And, you are not "saved" by a mere acceptance of Jesus Christ is your Savior.

Baptism is a *covenant relationship* you enter into. The significance of this is-a covenant is only broken through death and then it releases the other party to it from further obligation.

Paul, in Romans, is speaking of marriage as a covenant relationship and an example of covenants, in general.

"So then, if she should marry another man as long as the husband is living, she shall be called an adulteress; but if the husband should die, she is free from the law that bound her to the husband, so that she is no longer an adulteress if she is married to another man. In the same way, my brethren, you also were made dead to the marriage law of the Old Covenant by the body of Christ in order for you to be married to another, Who was raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit to God."

(Romans 7:3-4)

Through true baptism we enter into a New Covenant relationship with Christ through His death. (His death on the

cross broke the Old Covenant relationship noted above in Romans).

“... We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein? Or are you ignorant that we, as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death? Therefore, we were buried with Him through the baptism into the death; so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in the newness of life. For if we have been conjoined in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be in the likeness of His resurrection.”

(Romans 6:2-5)

When we are baptized we are baptized into Jesus' death by full immersion in water and resurrected in His life when we are raised from the water. At that point you have accepted and understand the terms of the covenant. Through our baptismal death we become partakers of the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ. It is then that His blood cleanses us and becomes the full payment for our sins. Through our baptismal resurrection we rise to the newness of life.

Upon rising out of the watery grave we are “begotten” with the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands. We are then led by the Holy Spirit to walk as Jesus walked. The true meaning of scripture is opened up to our understanding and we grow towards perfection.

Through our continued humble and sincere commitment to God and Christ Jesus we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.

“The Spirit itself bears witness conjointly with our own spirit, testifying that we are children of God. Now, if we are children, we are also heirs-truly, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ-if indeed we suffer together with Him, so that we may also be glorified together with Him. For I reckon that the suffering of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. For the

earnest expectation of the creation itself is awaiting the manifestation of the sons of God;"
(Romans 8:16-19; also Acts 26:18; Philippians 1:29; 2 Corinthians 4:17; 2 Peter 3:13)

It is vitally important to remember, although the rewards are great, so great we probably cannot truly appreciate them at this time, so are the penalties for falling away. In each point we are to move forward in faith. The faith that what God has put forth in His word is truth and we can literally, bet our lives on it. (Note: We will go over the beginning of Hebrews 6 to make the point but, you must read the entire chapter, vs 1-20 to receive the full benefit and understanding.)

"Therefore, advancing beyond the beginning principles of the doctrines of Christ, we should go on to perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith in God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of the laying on of hands, and of the resurrections of the dead, and of eternal judgement. And we will do this, if indeed God permits. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and who personally obtained the heavenly gift, and became partakers of the Holy Spirit, and who have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they have fallen away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing that they are crucifying the Son of God for themselves, and are publically holding Him in contempt."
(Hebrews 6:1-6)

We as believers are required to give up everything that made up our old life. We are to walk in newness with God and Christ. This is a tremendous commitment and one that should not be taken lightly. You will be entering into a covenant with God. Nothing can stand between you and your pledged commitment to God.

Pray about it before making that decision. When you can say you fully understand the commitment and are fully repentant

before God, ready to accept Jesus Christ as your personal savior
you are ready for that next step, baptism into the family of God.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is revealed to be the power God uses to accomplish His work and His will. Jesus told His disciples that when He left He would send a *Comforter*.

“But when the Comforter has come, which I will send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of the truth, which proceeds from the Father, that one shall bear witness of Me.”

(John 15:26).

Through the laying on of hands at baptism God grants us, true believers, the gift of His Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit we share in Gods power and knowledge. His love and attitude. Upon repentance and baptism and this gift of the Holy Spirit we are to become a new creation, burying the old sinful man.

“I have been crucified with Christ, yet I live. Indeed, it is no longer I; but Christ lives in me. For the life that I am now living in the flesh, I live by faith-that very faith of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

(Galatians 2:20).

This receiving of the Holy Spirit makes us complete and you have the power within you to lead a godly life.

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God.”

(Romans 8:14)

When we are baptized into the New Covenant the laws and commandments of God are to be written on our hearts and minds through the Holy Spirit.

“‘For this is the covenant that I will establish with the house of Israel after those days,’ says the Lord: ‘I will give My laws into their minds,

and inscribe them upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they will be my people."

(Hebrews 8:10 and 10:16; also Psalm 37:31; Zechariah 8:8)

We have made our commitment to God and His Son, Jesus Christ. We are now able to grow in the knowledge of God. New understanding is open to us through the Holy Spirit. We belong to God and Christ and are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.

The Holy Spirit is here to guide us through the remainder of our life here and to our final reward, everlasting life as a member of the God family. It will lead us in continued growth and knowledge, in loving and serving God and giving us a true understanding of God's holy word.

"Don't you realize that to whom you yield yourselves as servants to obey, you are servants of the one you obey, whether it is of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"

(Romans 6:16; also Matthew 6:24; John 8:34)

Choose to serve God.

Setting Our Biblical Foundation On THE Rock

Part 5

BASIC PRAYER: HOW WE TALK TO GOD

We have learned why we can trust and believe the Holy Bible, why we need Belief, Faith, Repentance and Baptism. We have learned the God Family consists of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ and that the Holy Spirit is how God accomplishes His work and expresses His will. God grants us the gift of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands at Baptism. It is through the Holy Spirit we grow in grace and knowledge.

So, after progressing to this point, how do we proceed? Does God have an extended plan after we have repented of our sins and have been forgiven? Yes, He does.

We have all been called by God to this place. We have come from different religious backgrounds and have been taught how to pray – or have we?

In this study we will learn how we are to communicate with God, how we are to grow in Grace and knowledge and how we should pray.

During His ministry Jesus explained we are not to do things in a public, in the sight of men in order to be seen by them. If we do He tells us we have received our reward, the praise of men and have no reward with the Father.

Beware that you do not bestow your alms in the sight of men in order to be seen by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father Who is in heaven. Therefore, when you give your alms, do not sound the trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and

in the streets, so they may have the glory from men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward."

(Matthew 6:1-2)

He relates this same guide in relation to prayer a few verses later.

"And when you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, in order that they may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward."

(Matthew 6:5)

We are to do these things in private, not looking for earthly reward but only the reward of the Father. Keep His word and live your life accordingly and it will show. Others will notice the change in you.

The apostle Peter in his last epistle before he was killed warned the members of the true church of God to hold fast to that which they had learned, the true facts of the faith, from those who had witnessed it firsthand. Peter was realizing, as were the other apostles and as had been told to them by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 24:4-5), men had and would come into the church to spread falsehoods and change the Word of God. Peter explained this heresy could only take hold if the followers fell into a state of complacency.

"Therefore, beloved, since you know this in advance, be on guard against such practices, lest you be led astray with the error of the lawless ones, and you fall from your own steadfastness; Rather, be growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and into the day of eternity. Amen."

(2 Peter 3:17-18; also Mark 13:22-23; Ephesians 4:14-15;

1 Peter 2:2)

This verse in 2 Peter tells not only those in the scattered and persecuted church to grow, but it also applies to us now, those who are baptized, have received the Holy Spirit and are sanctified. We need to, "...Be growing in grace and knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." This is our duty as believers.

"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect strangers scattered in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia; Who have been chosen according to the predetermined knowledge of God the Father, by sanctification through the Spirit, unto obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."

(1 Peter 1:1-2)

To accomplish this we need to diligently study the written inspired word of God, His Holy Bible, and pray.

HOW DO WE PRAY

Prayer, simply stated, is talking to God. As baptized members of the church of God it should be easy, right? Many of us were brought up in other churches and while there, we prayed. I was brought up Catholic and was taught to pray to God, to Jesus, to the Virgin Mary and the Saints, pray the rosary and to statues. Whew!

I was listening to a Christian radio station a few weeks ago and heard a priest say the only way the world is going to get out of the trouble it is in is for all of us to fervently pray to Mary, the mother of God. She is the only one that can get us out of this trouble. Is that what we are told in the Bible? Did Jesus instruct us to pray to His earthly mother or His apostles or the saints? No, He did not.

First, we want quiet, one on one time with God. Do not rush out into the living room and shout out you are going to pray. Do

not head to the street corner to pray in public in front of men. We saw that will be their reward. Instead, Jesus has guided us in how we are to pray.

“But you, when you pray, enter into a private room; and after shutting the door, pray to your Father Who is in secret; and your Father Who sees in secret shall reward you openly.”

(Matthew 6:6)

Jesus goes on to tell them not to use *vain repetitions*, there is no need because the Father knows what you have need of.

Jesus had been praying. When He finished one of His disciples asked if He would teach them to pray as John (the Baptist) had taught his disciples. Jesus said to them,

“When you pray, say, ‘Our Father Who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name; Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also upon the earth. Give us our bread as needed day by day; And forgive us our sins, as we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us; and lead us not into temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.’”

(Luke 11:2-4; also Matthew 6:9-13)

This has been called “The Lord’s Prayer”. It is more accurately called the model prayer asked for by the apostles, and given to them by Jesus.

Notice, He told them to pray to the Father. Our relationship is to be with God the Father and His son, Jesus Christ, not anyone or everyone who may be named in the Bible or a statue of anyone. He tells us to pray to God the Father. He gives us the model prayer and tells us, “When you pray, say...” Notice, what He is implying is that you are to pray. Not if you pray but, when you pray. Our prayers are to be done privately between us and God the Father.

In the model prayer we should notice a pattern. God the Father is acknowledged as *Our Father Who is in heaven*. We call

out to God the Father, we hallow or make holy His name. He is the creator God of the entire universe and we are to acknowledge this and show Him proper respect. We praise Him and all His glory. We are to approach our prayer session with a humble spirit. *Your kingdom come; Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.* We acknowledge Him as the most powerful being in the universe.

We must remember these two points. Jesus said,

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me."
(John 14:6)

"No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day,"
(John 6:44; also, John 6:65)

We are drawn in, called, by the Father to be part of the God Family. As we have previously studied, we are to believe that He is and that His begotten Son Jesus Christ died as a sacrifice for our sins, we are to have faith that all we learn in His word is truth, to understand we are sinners, truly repent of our sins and be baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands. We are to pray to Him through His Son, Jesus Christ who is our intercessor and High Priest.

"He has the power throughout all time to save those who come to God through Him because He is ever living to intercede for them. For it is fitting that we should have such a High Priest Who is holy, blameless, undefiled, set apart from sinners and made higher than the heavens."

(Hebrews 7:25-26; also, 1 John 2:1; Romans 8:34;

Hebrews 4:14-16; 1 Timothy 2:5)

Eternal life is knowing God the Father and Jesus Christ.

“For this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God,
and Jesus Christ, Whom You did send.”

(John 17:3)

Our true faith and spirituality hinges on our relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ. When we pray we have direct access to God the Father. Prayer is our means of establishing and maintaining communication with the Creator God.

The more we pray to God and study His word the better chance we have of becoming more like Him. He wants us to love, honor and obey him unconditionally. He wants us to have a giving attitude and character as He does. He wants our prayers to reflect the change in our lives. We can pray nonstop forever and if we do not change our lives and conform to Gods way of life, we *worship in vain*.

We need to have and maintain strong faith. Will we stumble from time to time? Of course we will, but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us.

“Now in the same way also, the Spirit is conjointly helping our weakness because we do not fully understand what we should pray for, according as it is necessary, but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be expressed by us. And the One Who searches the hearts comprehends what the strivings of the Spirit are because it makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

(Romans 8:26-27; also, Acts 1:24; Ephesians 6:18
1 John 5:14)

“According to the will of God”. What is it? In our case it is the work of perfecting the holiness of our heart. He is reproducing Himself in us. For the remainder of our life we must be

overcoming our earthly way of life and submitting to and perfecting a godly way of life. As we have seen, our reward is not from the accolades of men, nor should we want it to be, but from our God Who promises eternal life. We need to be holy as He is holy.

Since we were born we have had the spirit and carnal nature of the ruler of this world, Satan. We have been called by the Father and now need to work to be separate from the world. We began the journey when we decided to acknowledge we are sinners and repent. We are now to grow in the grace and knowledge of God and transform our sinful old self into a new creation.

“However, if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, then we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin.”

(1 John 1:7; also 1 Peter 1:19; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 9:14; Revelation 1:5)

Prayer is our means to speak to and communicate with the Father. We must always begin with a humble and repentant attitude. He is the Creator of all things and we have been granted access to Him.

He wants us to do His will in all that we do. That includes our prayers to Him. When we do His will we are actually showing Him that we are beginning to think like Him. He is being imparted to us through the Holy Spirit.

Prayer is sometimes referred to as a one sided conversation. Is it? We pray to God regularly. His will gets imparted to us. We begin to think more like Him. When we do make a mistake, what happens? Some may call it conscience but is it really? Could it be that as we turn our life around and pray and study and grow in grace and knowledge it is God speaking to us as that “Little Voice” letting us know we are beginning to stray from His word or path? Based on my experience, I would say it is. He talks to all of us in different ways. He will remind us we have entered a

covenant relationship with Him and He does not want us to fall or fail. That "Little Voice" reminds us of that.

As our faith grows we will find ourselves wanting to talk to God, to pray, more and more. Remember, faith is very important.

"Now without faith it is impossible to please God. For it is mandatory for the one who comes to God to believe that He exists, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

(Hebrews 11:6)

Now, as new believers we must develop a habit of praying. As we read above, find a quiet room away from everyone and everything. Get on your knees and with a humble and repentant attitude, acknowledge our heavenly Father and have a heartfelt conversation. He knows our hearts. We can hide nothing from Him. An old saying goes, "Thirty days does a habit make." Make it a habit. Talk to and walk with God daily and it will become a great habit. Some days I get side tracked and do not pray at my "usual" time. I get a feeling I have missed or forgotten something. I stop what I am doing and get right – I get back on the path. If I do not, my day seems ruined.

A closing note; many people will not pray when they stumble or fall. It is almost as if they are embarrassed to appear before God. Please think of this, He knows everything. Why would He not know you stumbled? This is when it is important you go to pray. Show God you are repentant. Ask for forgiveness. It is all part of growing and maturing in the faith. It also shows you are developing that godly attitude and character He so much wants us to have.

Setting Our Biblical Foundation On THE Rock

Part 6

GOD'S PLAN FOR MANKIND His Sabbath's and Holy Day's

An Ancient Prayer

From the cowardice that shrinks from new truths,
From the laziness that is content with half truths,
From the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth,
Oh God of Truth, deliver us.

INTRODUCTION

The weekly Sabbath's, the Spring Holy Days/Festivals and the Fall Holy Days/Festivals reveal God's plan for mankind. Biblical references will be given for all writings so you may check the validity of what is presented for yourself. We ask you to pray for understanding and wisdom and to keep an open mind. What is presented will fly in the face of most "traditional" Christian beliefs. Ask, and prove for yourself, what are those/your beliefs based on?

We will present an overview, address Leviticus 23 where the Feasts of the Lord are listed and then go over each of God's Holy Days with their Old and New Testament applications.

OVERVIEW

Much of the way man worships today is not Biblically based. Many follow along as they have been taught, making the

assumption that what they do and believe is right. They never take the time to really prove their beliefs.

The holidays observed by most Christians today are not Biblically commanded Holy Days. With very little effort it can be confirmed that they are pagan in origin. The holiday celebrations we know as Christmas and Easter actually pre-date Christianity. Most professing Christians do not care, even though most know this. The claim is they are worshipping the true God. Is this alright? Does our Creator God allow any type of worship? Don't bet your eternal life on it.

When the children of Israel and Judah began to fall away from the true God they were worshipping the same gods as we do now in our Christmas and Easter celebrations. At that time God commanded:

"Hear the word which the Lord speaks to you, O house of Israel. Thus says the Lord, 'Do not learn the way of the heathen, and do not be terrified at the signs of the heavens; for the nations are terrified at them.'"

(Jeremiah 10:1-2; also, Leviticus 18:1-5)

Referring to His Sabbath's and Holy Days God gives Moses specific instructions in Deuteronomy.

"Take heed to yourselves that your heart may not be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods, and worship them."

(Deuteronomy 11:16)

"When the Lord your God shall cut off the nations before you, where you go to possess them, and take your place and dwell in their land, take heed to yourself that you do not become ensnared by following them, after they are destroyed before you, and that you

do not ask about their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods that I may also do likewise?' You shall not do so to the Lord your God, for every abomination to the Lord, which He hates, they have done to their gods; even their sons and their daughters they have burned in the fires to their gods. Whatever thing that I command you, be careful to do it. You shall not add to it, nor take away from it."

(Deuteronomy 12:29-32; also, Deuteronomy 4:2; Leviticus 18:1-5, 26, 30; Joshua 1:7; Revelation 22:18)

Remember this, the true God does not change. What He commanded in the Old Testament is as valid today as it was then. If not, He is lying and the entire Bible is of no consequence.

"For I am the Lord, I change not. Therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed."

(Malachi 3:6)

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

(Hebrews 13:8)

God has not and does not change.

Are you following the Bible and God's Commandments or are you following *traditions*? Remember, Jesus addressed the issue of following *tradition*:

Well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honors Me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men.' For leaving the commandment of God, you hold fast the tradition of men,"

(Mark 7:6-8; also Mark 7:8-13; Isaiah 29:13).

Are you worshipping in vain?

Most religion and worship today is based on pagan influence. Their festivals and feasts pre-date Christianity and they did infiltrate the early church. It began to get a foothold in the mid part of the 2nd century and by the 3rd century was well entrenched. Jesus warned of false prophets in His Sermon on the Mount. He was asked for a sign of His coming and His first comment was regarding this issue.

“Then Jesus answered and said to them, “Be on guard, so that no one deceives you. For many shall come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ’; and they shall deceive many.”

(Matthew 24:4-5; also, Matthew 24:11, 24; Mark 13:22)

Apostles Peter, Paul and John also warned of these prophets and apostles coming into the church.

(See; 2 Corinthians 11:12-15;
1 Timothy 1:3-7, 6:3-5, 20-21; 1 Peter 2:1-3; 1 John 4:1-3).

Christians as early as 66 AD, and again in 132-135 AD, were suffering persecution at the hands of the Romans who made Judaism and the Way, as early Christianity was known, difficult in the empire. They tried to worship in secret, keeping weekly Sabbath's and the Holy Days, as Jesus and the Apostle's did, and outwardly worshiping the pagan ways of the Roman's so they would not call attention to themselves. By the beginning of the 4th century the part of the church centered in Rome had a strong pagan influence. By 325 AD and Emperor Constantine's Council of Nicaea, the influence of pagan beliefs was codified in the universal church.

At His last Passover meal with them Jesus told His Disciples,
“For I have given you an example, to show that you also should do exactly as I have done to you.”

(John 13:15; also, 1 Peter 2:21; 1 John 2:6)

After His resurrection He told them to go to all nations and teach them to observe all things He had commanded them.

“Therefore, go and make disciples in all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, even until the completion of the age.”
Amen.”

(Matthew 28:19-20; also, Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38-39; Romans 10:18; Colossians 1:23)

The apostle’s tried to keep this influence out of the early church. They continued on keeping the Sabbaths, Feasts and Holy Days as they had done with Jesus. Paul told the Corinthians,

“Be imitators of me, exactly as I also am of Christ.”

(1 Corinthians 11:1; also, Ephesians 5:1-2; Philippians 3:17)

“And they steadfastly continued in the teachings of the apostles and in fellowship, and in the breaking of bread and in prayers.”

(Acts 2:42; also, Acts 1:14; Ephesians 6:18; Hebrews 10:25)

Paul explained the problem of alternative worship to the church in Corinth.

“But that which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God; and I do not wish you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord, and the table of demons. Now do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?”

(1 Corinthians 10:20-22)

As a child Jesus’ and His family observed Sabbaths and Holy Days. They traveled to Jerusalem where, at age 12 Jesus spoke to the religious theologians in the temple astounding them with His knowledge.

“Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast.”

“Now it came to pass that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them and questioning them. And all those who were listening to Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers.”

(Luke 2:41-42, 46-47)

When Jesus established His ministry He and the Apostles kept these same Sabbaths and Holy days as did the first century church after His ascension into heaven. (See Holy Days/Sabbaths and Feasts of the Lord, attached).

If we are to truly be followers of Jesus Christ we must use Him and the actions of the apostle's after Jesus' death as our guide, not the traditions of men. (Acts 2:42; Mark 7:6-8, noted above).

“The one who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”

“Anyone who claims to dwell in Him is obligating himself also to walk even as He Himself walked.”

(1 John 2:4, 6; also, 1 John 1:6; John 15:4; 1 Peter 2:21)

We are still required to keep God's Sabbath's and holy days.

“And the Lord spoke to Moses saying, ‘Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘Concerning the appointed feasts of the Lord, which you all proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are My appointed feasts. These are the appointed feasts of the Lord, holy convocations which you shall proclaim in their appointed seasons.’”

(Leviticus 23:1-2, 4)

Notice, the Lord spoke to Moses..."concerning the appointed feasts of the Lord ...these are My appointed feasts". Please note two things. First, Moses was directed by God to speak to the children of Israel which included all 12 tribes that had come out of Egypt, not just the Jews. Secondly, God states *twice* these are His feasts, holy convocations. Nowhere does He say they are anyone else's feasts. Not man's or the children of Israel or the Jews. These were HIS feasts. In Leviticus 23 we are commanded to keep these feasts throughout our generations forever.

GOD'S OVERALL PLAN

God's weekly Sabbath's and holy days are annual memorials for things past and rehearsals for future events. As a shadow of things to come, so to speak.

"Therefore, do not allow anyone to judge you in eating or in drinking, or with regard to a festival, or new moon, or the Sabbaths, which are a foreshadow of the things that are coming, but the body of Christ. Do not allow anyone to defraud you of the prize by doing his will in self-abasement and the worship of angels, intruding into things that he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his own carnal mind."

(Colossians 2:16-18; also, Hebrews 8:5)

(Note: In these verses Paul is affirming to the Gentile faithful in the church in Colosse (also spelled Colossae) they were to continue doing God's Holy Days, Sabbath's and commandments as they had been taught. He was instructing them to disregard criticism from those who were outside the church, the pagan worshippers from where many in the church had come from, and to reassure them they were in the true church.)

The identity of the true believers and the church was also brought out in other scriptures.

"But now Christ has been raised from the dead; He has become the first-fruit of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in

Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruit; then, those who are in Christ at His coming."

(1 Corinthians 15:20-23; also, James 1:18)

Taken together the Sabbath's and Holy Days lay the ground work for the return of Jesus Christ and His 1000 year reign on earth. They symbolize the various steps in God's plan right up to the White Thrown Judgement and the New Heaven and the New Earth detailed in 2 Peter 3:13 and Revelation 20:11-15 and 21:1.

Each year as we keep the holy days we should be able to better understand God's plan of salvation for us. By keeping the weekly Sabbath's and these annual feasts and holy days we are able pass this knowledge on to each generation.

After Jesus was glorified His disciples had a more clear understanding of what had been written about Him and what was done to Him.

"And His disciples did not understand these things at the beginning; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him, and that they had done these things to Him."

(John 12:16; also, John 7:39; 14:26)

Peter understood God's concept of the dimension of time was vastly different than ours as he explained.

"Now, beloved, do not let this one fact be hidden from you: that with the Lord, one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

(2 Peter 3:8; also, Psalm 90:4)

Isaiah tells us that God is He who inhabits eternity.

"For thus says the high and lofty One Who inhabits eternity; Whose name is Holy;"

(Isaiah 57:15)

From creation week there have been seven days in the week, six days to work and the seventh day to rest and honor and reflect on God.

"And God saw everything that He had made, and indeed, it was exceedingly good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And by the beginning of the seventh day God finished His work which He had made. And He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because on it He rested from all His work which God had created and made."

(Genesis 1:31; 2:1-3; also, Exodus 20:11; Leviticus 19:30; Deuteronomy 5:14)

Paul spoke of God's Sabbath rest in a more far reaching manner showing us there was to be a more peaceful time following this age, an extended Sabbath rest. (read Heb 4:3-11)

John shows us that the Millennial reign of Christ, after the first resurrection, is to be one thousand years, or one day in God's timing.

"Then I saw an angel descending from heaven, having the key of the abyss, and a great chain in his hand. And he took hold of the dragon, the ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. Then he cast him into the abyss, and locked him up, and sealed the abyss over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer until the thousand years were

fulfilled; and after that it is ordained that he be loosed for a short time."

(Rev 20:1-4)

So this extended seventh day Sabbath rest is 1000 years, the first six days will have been the 6000 years of man's attempt to rule and govern himself since the fall from grace. Each day representing 1000 years in God's time.

Biblical charting shows there were approximately 4000 years from creation to the birth of Christ, His first coming. Approximately 2000 years have gone by since then, almost six of God's days. We seem to be approaching the time of Revelation 20.

God's plan is to bring man back into the glory He created us for.

"And God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the heaven and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that crawls upon the earth. And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him. He created them male and female.'"

(Genesis 1:26-27; also, Isaiah 46:9-11; Romans 8:28-29)

Based on scripture we can look forward to:

The return of Christ as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords to set up his Millennial Kingdom.

(Rev 19:1-21)

The small harvest of God's Firstfruits, the Saints who are to rule with Christ for the 1000 years, the first resurrection.

(1 Cor 15: 20-23; Rev 20: 4)

Satan is to be bound for 1000 years and cast into the bottomless pit.

(Rev 20: 1-3)

All others who have ever lived will be resurrected and be given a chance, 100 years, to accept the true God and receive eternal life. Those who will reject this will be cast into the Lake of Fire.

(Rev 20:11-15; Isaiah 65: 20-25; Ezekiel 37: 1-28)

After all these things come to pass God the Father will create a new heaven and a new earth, nothing ever tainted by Satan, and His chosen family will live and reign with Him for eternity.

(Rev 21:1-27, 22:1-21; Isaiah 65:17-19)

God's seven annual holy days coincide with the annual harvest cycle of ancient Israel. They fall on the spring harvest, *Passover* and the seven days of *Unleavened Bread*; the early summer harvest, *Pentecost*; and the fall harvest, the Feast of *Trumpets*, the day of *Atonement*, the feast of *Tabernacles* and the *Last Great Day*.

All are listed in Leviticus 23:1-39. As we study them we will explore the significance of each to gain a better understanding of their true meaning in God's overall plan.

As we continue on to the study of each of God's Sabbath's and Holy Days you must:

Do your own research.

Prove all things for yourself.

Your beliefs and practices must be based on proof, Biblical Truth, not man's traditions.

"Why do you also transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? And you have made void the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition. For they worship Me in vain, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men."

(Matthew 15:3, 6, 9; also, Isaiah 29:13; Ezekiel 33:31;
Titus 1:13-14)

"Diligently study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of the truth."

(2 Tim 2:15)

THE HOLY DAYS/SABBATHS and FEASTS OF THE LORD

(Leviticus 23:1-39 appointed by God as His days and feasts to be kept by the children of Israel forever throughout their generations.)

<u>Appointed Time</u>	<u>Biblical Authority</u>	<u>Observed by Jesus, Apostles And 1st Century Church</u>
7 th day Sabbath	Gen 2:2-3; Lev 23:3	Mark 2:27-28, 6:2; Luke 4:16, John 9:14, Acts 16:13,17:2,18:4, Heb 4:4
Passover	Lev 23:5:	Matt 26:2, 17-19; Mark 14:12-16; Luke 2:41, 22:1, 7-15; John 2:13, 23, 6:4, 13:1-17; 1 Cor 5: 7-8, 1 Cor 11: 23-29
Feast of Unleavened Bread	Lev 23: 6-8	Matt 26:17; Mark 14:12; Luke 2: 41-43, 22:1, 7; Acts 20:6; 1 Cor 5: 7-8
Feast of Pentecost	Lev 23: 15-22	Acts 2:1-21, 20:16; 1 Cor 16:8
Feast of Trumpets	Lev 23: 23-25	(see note below) Matt 24:30-31; 1 Thes 4:16-17; Rev 11:15
Day of Atonement	Lev 23: 26-32	Acts 27:9
Feast of Tabernacles	Lev 23: 33-43	John 7:2, 8-14
The Eighth (Last Great) Day	Lev 23: 36, 39	John 7:2, 8-14

Jesus told His Disciples at His last Passover meal with them that He has given them an example and they should do as He had done to them (John 13:15). After his resurrection He told the Disciples to go to all nations and teach them to observe all things He commanded them (Matt 28:19-20). Paul told the Corinthians to follow his example as he follows Christ (1 Cor 11:1). On Pentecost, (after Jesus had ascended to heaven), "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship," (Acts 2:42). 1 John 2:4, 6 tell us, "He that says, I know him, and keeps not his commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in him." "He that says he abides in him ought himself also to walk, even as he walked."

Note: God's Holy Days reveal his plan for mankind, a type of dress rehearsal. The Feast of Trumpets is not specifically named but a number of passages refer to the announcement of the coming of the Lord with a shout of the archangel and with the trumpet of God. (Matt 24:31; 1 Thes 4:16; 1 Cor 15:52).

Setting Our Biblical Foundation On THE Rock

Part 7

GOD'S PLAN FOR MANKIND God's True Seventh Day Sabbath

INTRODUCTION

Ask almost any person who claims to be a Christian what the day of worship is and they will tell you Sunday, of course. Is it? If it is, can we show when was it established? Is it so in the Bible? If it is not the same as detailed in the Bible why do we worship on this day? What difference does the day we worship the Creator God really matter as long as we set aside a day to Him.

In this study we will learn the true day for Christians to worship, the true Sabbath and its significance and importance to the practicing Christian.

We will provide scriptural and historical references to show the true Sabbath.

BIBLICALLY

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the hosts of them. And by the beginning of the seventh day God finished His work which He had made. And He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because on it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

(Genesis 2: 1-3; also, Exodus 31:13-17; Deuteronomy 26:2; Hebrews 4:4)

As we can see by these verses the weekly Sabbath was created and sanctified by God in the beginning. There were no Jews or Catholics or Protestants or Muslims. Just the God family, Adam and Eve and the created animals. We can say with all authority that God instituted and sanctified the seventh day Sabbath at creation and, as we see in His inspired word, the Holy Bible, Old and New Testament, He has not changed it nor granted ANY person OR human institution the authority to change it.

The Sabbath command is so important to our God that some 2500 years later He codified it by telling the children of Israel, all twelve tribes, and then writing it as the fourth of the Ten Commandments onto tablets. (He etched them in stone for all eternity).

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your livestock, nor the stranger within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.

(Exodus 20:8-11; also, Deuteronomy 5:12-15)

The weekly seventh day Sabbath (Shabbat) is the covenant sign between God and his children forever. It identifies His people. During their captivity in Egypt the children of Israel forgot their ways of worship. After they left Egypt, God through Moses began to renew their holy ways. Exodus 16 shows God introducing Sabbath keeping to the children of Israel. He, God, had heard their murmurings against Moses and Aaron. The congregation had accused them of taking the whole congregation out of Egypt into the wilderness to starve them.

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from the heavens for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain amount every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in My law or not. And it shall come to pass on the sixth day, they shall prepare what they bring in. And it shall be twice as much as they gather day by day."

(Exodus 16:4-5; also, Exodus 16:22-24).

This set the stage for the re-introduction of the Sabbath they had lost during their captivity in Egypt. They were to gather and prepare on the sixth day an amount that would allow them to rest on the seventh day.

In Exodus 31: 12-18 Moses was on Mt. Sanai conferring with the Lord Who said,

"Speak also to the children of Israel, saying, 'Truly you shall keep my Sabbaths, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations to know that I am the Lord Who sanctifies you. You shall keep the Sabbath therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone that defiles it shall surely be put to death, for whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed.'" And He gave to Moses, when He had made an end of speaking with him upon Mount Sanai, two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written by the finger of God.

(See also, Isaiah 58:13-14)

God told Moses, to speak unto the children of Israel (again, this included all 12 tribes and not all were Jews) telling them, in

verse 16, to keep God's Sabbaths because it was to be a sign between God and them throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant.

From the beginning the days were numbered, 1 through 7. Naming of the days did not come until many centuries later when they were named after pagan gods. From Genesis forward the seventh day Sabbath was always on the seventh day. (Gen 2:23; Exodus 31:12-17; Lev 23:3). Nowhere in the Bible does it change this OR grant any man or church the authority to do so. Neither does it teach to keep any other day of the seven holy. No one has that divine authority except God, regardless of what they say or claim.

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until the heaven and the earth shall pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the Law until everything has been fulfilled."

(Mathew 5:17-18)

The seventh day is to be observed as the Sabbath day of rest. Not the sixth day, Friday or the first day, Sunday, regardless of the human reasoning behind it. These are days decided by and set aside by man, not God. Mark 2:27-28, 6:2; John 9:14; Acts 16:13, 17:2, 18:4; Heb 4:4, all New Testament verses, speak of the Sabbath as observed by Jesus and the disciples. Jesus observed the seventh day Sabbath, as was his custom. Jesus started His ministry on a Sabbath;

"And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and according to His custom, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up to read.

(Luke 4:16; also Luke 4:17-21; Mark 6:2)

Paul also taught in the synagogues on the Sabbath, Acts 13:14, 17:1-2, 18:4.

In the New Testament the Pharisees challenged Jesus on the Sabbath keeping of Him and the apostle's saying what they were doing was not lawful.

"And He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath; Therefore, the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

(Mark 2:27-28; also, Matthew 12:8).

The true church of God led by His apostle's, the one He formed on Pentecost after His resurrection, kept and taught keeping the seventh day, and all God's Sabbaths, to Jew and Gentile alike.

"And when the Jews had gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles entreated him that these words might be spoken to them on the next Sabbath. Now after the synagogue had been dismissed, many of the Jews and proselytes who worshipped there followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. And on the coming Sabbath, almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the Word of God.

(Acts 13:42-44)

As time went on we saw, by way of syncretism, aspects of pagan sun worship and pagan holidays being combined with the worship of God of the Bible. Jesus told His disciples to beware of these things. In the Olivet Prophecy, Matthew 24, verses 3-5;

"... His disciples came to Him alone, saying, "Tell us when these things shall be? And what shall be the sign of Your coming, and the completion of the age?" Jesus' first comment to them was, "Be on guard, so that no one deceives you. For many shall come in My name, saying 'I am the Christ'; and they shall deceive many."

Earlier, in Matthew 7:15-16, Jesus warned;

“But beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep’s clothing, for within they are ravening wolves. You shall know them by their fruits.”

They will proclaim their authority and falsely claim it is from Christ. “You shall know them by their fruits.”

Remember what our Lord said to Satan when He was being tempted.

“It is written, ‘Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’”

This is found in Matthew 4:4 and Jesus is referring back to Deuteronomy 8:3, tying in Old and New Testament which we have learned comprises the whole inspired written word of God.

HISTORICALLY

By the third century the way of worshipping the God of the Bible was quite unlike that practiced in the first century by Jesus and the Apostle’s. By the beginning of the fourth century what was called Christianity was far from the faith described in the Bible and that practiced and taught by the apostle’s. They had almost completely abandoned the original ways of Christian worship handed down by the Apostles.

In the beginning of the fourth century the most notable of these was Constantine the Great. Although Emperor Constantine is hailed as the first Christian Emperor of the Roman Empire he made a political decision to unify the Empire by implementing his form of Christianity. Not long after taking power in 306 A.D. open worship of all gods was allowed. Because of this Christian’s could again openly worship. Most of the empire was pagan and

worshipped a number of pagan gods. Constantine had worshipped the sun god Apollo, most of his life. It also made the transition easier because much of the empire had pagan roots and worshipped sun gods. He blended the worship of the God of the Bible with the existing leading pagan Roman sun god, Sol Invictus, who was brought to prominence in Rome by Emperor Aurelian (270-275 A.D.) This was the all-inclusive title of the sun gods Mithra and Apollo, among others, who had been worshipped throughout the Middle East and Egypt for centuries before Christ. (The practice started after the death of Nimrod, Noah's great-grandson. His wife, who took his place instituted the practice after declaring he was the god Tammuz.)

In 321 AD Constantine, by decree, ordered that Sunday would be the day of rest in the empire. No longer would Christians be allowed to rest or celebrate the true Sabbath on the seventh day. They, and all the empire had to observe the first day, Sunday, as the day of rest and no one was allowed to rest on Saturday, the true seventh day Sabbath. The pagan Romans had little problem with this because they were already worshipping on *Sunday*, the day of the sun. *Christianizing* a pagan day of worship and calling it the Sabbath and requiring all to obey and keep it.

Constantine had assembled a council of Christian bishops who were of his choosing. Most came from areas of the empire that had been mixing Christianity and paganism for years. The group would expand the practice to *Christianize* other pagan holy days.

In 325 AD the Council of Nicaea, presided over by Constantine, declared Passover would be observed on the first Sunday after the full moon, on or after the Vernal Equinox. He, a man, therefore changed the memorial of the death and resurrection of Christ. He declared it was to be always on a Sunday and was to be called Easter. This would work to honor another pagan goddess, the fertility god, Astarte/Ishtar. There are no records that show the first century church ever celebrating Easter. He changed it to man's time, not Gods. These, and the institution of Christmas, December 25th, the birthday of Sol

Invictus, the pagan sun god, as the day to celebrate the birth of Christ, are some of the early universal churches "achievements". The church that Constantine "founded" was called the universal (Catholic) church. Later known as the Roman Catholic Church and the Holy Roman Church. (Note: Above information taken from, *The History of the Church*, by Eusebius; *The History of the Christian Church*, by Phillip Schaff; *Time is the Ally of Deceit*, by Richard Rives; and *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, a Faithful Version*, by Fred R. Coulter).

The Catholic Church Weighs In

In February 1893 the Seventh-day Adventists filed papers that condemned the U.S. Congress and the U.S. Supreme Court for invading the rights of the people by closing the World's Fair on Sunday. As a result, the Catholic Mirror of Baltimore, MD published a 4 part series on the Sabbath. The Catholic Mirror was the official organ of James Cardinal Gibbons and the Papacy of the United States.

The series began on September 2, 1893 and ran on successive Saturdays, 9th, 16th and 23rd. Their main argument was that the Seventh-day Adventist kept the Biblical Sabbath of the seventh day, as did the Jews. In the first installment they felt, "(t)he Christian world is, morally speaking, united on the question and practice of worshipping God on the *first day of the week*." They then went on to state, "The Protestant world has been, from its infancy, in the sixteenth century, in thorough accord with the Catholic Church, in keeping "holy", not Saturday, but Sunday.

Both the Protestants and the Seventh-day Adventists had as part of their belief systems the Bible as the "infallible" teacher. This appeared to be the spark that would allow the Catholic Church to go after the 300 year old question that was raised by Martin Luther, among others. The Catholic Mirror stated, "No Protestant living today has ever yet obeyed that command, preferring to follow the apostate church referred to than his teacher the Bible, which from Genesis to Revelation, *teaches no other*

doctrine, should the Israelites and Seventh-day Adventists be correct."

The Catholic Mirror went on in the next two issues, September 9th and 16th, 1893 stating the same message, there is no Biblical authority in the Old or New Testament that does away with the seventh day as the God ordained day of rest. They stated in the September 9th edition, "In the Old Testament, reference is made one hundred and twenty-six times to the Sabbath, and all these texts conspire harmoniously in voicing the will of God commanding the seventh day to be kept, because God Himself *first kept it*, making it obligatory on all as "*perpetual covenant*." Nor can we imagine any one foolhardy enough to question the identity of Saturday with the Sabbath or seventh day, seeing that the people of Israel have been keeping the Saturday from the giving of the law, A.M. 2514 to A.D. 1893, a period of 3383 years. (Note: Coming up to our time it is 3506 years).

The Catholic Mirror is stating that if you are in fact a Bible following Christian, you should be keeping the seventh day Sabbath. They acknowledge there is no scriptural authority, given or found, to change it. The Old Testament chosen people kept it. Jesus and the apostle's kept it and gave no indication through their actions it had changed.

In the September 16th edition shows a couple of references to Sunday. One was the gathering together of the apostle's in Jerusalem on Sunday after Jesus was resurrected, Luke 24:33-40, and in John 20:19 when, later that same evening Jesus appeared to them. The Catholic Mirror gives these verses no other credence except to say some may try to use this as a reason for departing from the old Sabbath, by keeping holy the new day, Sunday.

In the September 23rd, and final edition on this matter, the Catholic Mirror refers to, "the Day of the Lord" or "Lord's Day". Again they site the end time scriptures and are scripturally correct when they describe these days as when the Lord returns, the second coming of Christ. They do list the original fourth

commandment as their third because they deleted the true third commandment dealing with graven images. The section titled, Conclusion, gives a summary of all the issues they have so accurately detailed in the previous three editions.

The next heading in the Catholic Mirror article is,
Sunday As Day of Worship Is Catholic Creation

“Before closing this series of articles, we beg to call the attention of our readers once more to our caption, introductory of each; viz., 1. The Christian Sabbath (Catholic Sunday), [is] the genuine offspring of the union of the Holy Spirit with the Catholic Church His spouse. 2. The claim of Protestantism to any part therein proved to be groundless, self-contradictory, and suicidal.

The first proposition needs little proof. The Catholic Church for over one thousand years before the existence of a Protestant, by virtue of her divine mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday. We say by virtue of her divine mission, because He who called Himself the “Lord of the Sabbath”, endowed her with His own power to teach, “he that heareth you, heareth Me”; commanded all who believe in Him to hear her, under penalty of being placed with the “heathen and publican”; and promised to be with her to the end of the world. She holds her charter as teacher from Him—a charter as infallible as perpetual.”

I will tell you, there is also no scriptural foundation for this claim. None. God never gave any human or human institution the ability to alter His Supreme Law. And, as we have seen, it was by decree that Emperor Constantine’s Council of Nicaea that made the change.

It has been with us since creation as we saw in Genesis 2: 1-3. Also remember how days are reckoned in the Bible, sunset to sunset. The Sabbath begins at sunset on Friday evening and ends at sunset on Saturday evening.

The Sabbath day was set aside to remind us that our Creator God is the one true God. It sets aside a specific day, the seventh, so we may commune with Him on a regular basis. It shapes the way we perceive Him and worship Him. His command is simple, remember the Sabbath by formally acknowledging and worshipping Him on the day He commands.

This time is perfect for developing and refining our spiritual relationship with Him. Even though the commandment states it is a day of rest from our normal activities, it is not a day to do nothing. God intends it to be a productive and delightful period where we will draw closer to Him.

“If you turn your foot away from the Sabbath, from doing your own desires on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor pursuing your own desires, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the Lord; and I will cause you to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed you with the inheritance of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.”
(Isaiah 58:13-14; also, Isaiah 40:5, 56:2; Deuteronomy 32:13)

Think of this, stop our labor and normal, hectic lifestyles for a specific, commanded period of time and delight ourselves in the Lord. The Pharisees had compiled 1,521 regulations to cover every aspect of Sabbath conduct making it far from the delight it was intended to be. Keeping the Sabbath allows us time to know our Creator God and devote our attention to Him. It is a constant reminder to us that we are His creation, in His image, and He is the Creator of all things.

“By faith we understand that the worlds were created by the word of God, so that the things that are seen were made from things that are invisible.”

(Hebrews 11:3; also, Hebrews 11:39)

God rested from the physical part of creation but He never rests from the spiritual part. He is continuing to shape and mold us and move us closer to His divine character.

It is a time when His true follower's fellowship with and grow closer to one another.

"And let us be concerned about one another, and be stirring up one another unto love and good works; Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, even as some are accustomed to do; but rather, encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near."

(Hebrews 10:24-25; also, Acts 2:42; 2 Peter 3:9; Romans 13:11)

We, as believers, carry God's purpose to the rest of the world by our example. Our witness to the world is demonstrated by how we live our lives. By the example we set. This is nurtured by our continued observance of the weekly Sabbath. It keeps us focused and in tune with our Creator. Jesus refers to the Sabbath in a very specific way, it is the Sabbath, not a Sabbath. It was a gift to all of us, all of mankind. It was set at creation as a blessing for mankind as a physical and spiritual rest.

"..., The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath; Therefore, the Son of man is the Lord of the Sabbath."

(Mark 2:27-28; also, Matthew 12:8)

God did four things on the first Sabbath, He ended His work; He rested from physical creation; He blessed the seventh day; He sanctified the seventh day. Jesus and God the Father continue to work although in a different sense. Now it is spiritual, creating us in their image. When the Pharisees became enraged at Jesus for the way He kept the Sabbath.

"Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I work."

(John 5:17; also, John 9:4, 14:10).

The spiritual aspect began with the creation of the Sabbath and continues on. The Sabbath being a special time of spiritual activity that God uses to prepare His children for His Kingdom.

On the Sabbath we are blessed and empowered by God with the Holy Spirit to follow His way.

“It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.”

(Exodus 31:17; also, Exodus 31:13; Ezekiel 20:12)

So we also see that the weekly Sabbath is a covenant sign between God and His people. Remember, this was given to the children of Israel and as part of the New Covenant we are part of spiritual Israel. It is the bond that unites all of God’s people and sanctifies them from everyone else.

Notice above that the Deuteronomy 5 reading of the fourth commandment is a little different than that in Exodus 20.

“And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.”

(Deuteronomy 5:15; also, Deuteronomy 4:34; 15:15; 16:12; 24:18).

He is reminding us we were slaves and are now free. This is another aspect of keeping the Sabbath, we are reminded of our Creator God and how He loves and protects us when we obey His commandments, the law of liberty.

Our example in Sabbath keeping is Jesus Christ. He is Lord of the Sabbath and, was present with God the Father at creation, John 1:1-10. We are told to keep the Sabbath holy but not much else is specifically given. This is where the example of Jesus comes in.

“For I have given you an example, to show that you also should do exactly as I have done to you.”

(John 13:15; also, 1 Peter 2:21; 1 John 2:6; Philippians 2:5)

He has given us a foundation, a starting point, to judge our Sabbath activity. He has given us broad principles and wants us to consider how we should apply them.

Think of the New Covenant in which Jesus “magnified” the law. We are no longer held to the letter of the law but are now to be aware of the spirit of the law. It serves as a constant renewal of our spiritual heritage from God and of our subsequent release from sin.

Jesus had been challenged by the Jewish authorities, specifically the Pharisees, about the way and the manner in which He conducted Himself on the Sabbath. In almost every instance Jesus was healing someone. They asked;

“..., is it lawful to heal on the Sabbaths? So that they might accuse Him. But He said to them, “What man is there among you who, if he has one sheep that falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out?”

(Matthew 12:11-12)

The Pharisees were attempting to judge Jesus by their burdensome regulations. Jesus was not attempting to do away with or change the Sabbath, He was trying to steer it back to His original intent by breaking their misinterpretation of the intent.

He expands this in Mark 3:3-4;

“Then He said to the man who had the withered hand, “Stand up here in the center.” And He said to them, “Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbaths or to do evil? To save life, or to kill?” But they were silent.”

God gave us the Sabbath to free us from chronic problems of human nature. He wants us to remember we were slaves to sin and are now free. He wants us to do good on the Sabbath when we can and not to fail to do good when the situation arises. If we fail, we are not keeping the spirit of the law.

Also included in the spirit is to show compassion towards and help those in need. He showed us that He was freeing people from their burdens, infirmities, and expects us to do the same. Remember the second great command, love your neighbor as yourself. God works on the Sabbath. He is continually doing spiritual work. He is working towards His final purpose, the ultimate salvation of mankind. He is healing, forgiving, and loosening burdens all in the realm of His goal. The Sabbath is a day to work for the salvation of ourselves and our fellow man, spiritually and physically.

God intends that His law ensures life and relieves burdens. If we have to do something on a Sabbath that would not be normally accepted, what is our intent? If we can lawfully keep it in the same light as Jesus, our example, we will be alright. Intent over letter. This does not mean that every week we find something else to do on the Sabbath, but it does allow for that unforeseen circumstance.

Situations will arise from time to time where we will need guidance. Faithful Sabbath keeping and growing in the knowledge of the scriptures will end up being our best guide.

Think of this when you start questioning or have to defend or testify about what you are doing to others. If you found yourself with no *religious* influence in your life other than the Holy Bible, what days would you be celebrating as Sabbath's and Holy Days? I guess that makes all other days currently being celebrated the traditions of men, doesn't it?

First Century Fellowship Ministry

A Biblical Church of God

Tenets

An Ancient Prayer

From the cowardice that shrinks from new truths,
From the laziness that is content with half-truths,
From the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth,
Oh God of Truth, deliver us.

- Today's Christianity is a long way from Christ's original church founded on Pentecost in the 1st century. Like the Pharisees in Matthew 15, their traditions are more important to them than the word of God, and as Christ said, "But in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Matthew 15:9) (Isaiah 29:13).
- As did the First Century Church, it is important that we too worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). The blending, syncretism, of pagan and other beliefs by false prophets and teachers was foretold by Jesus in Matthew 24:11, 24, and also by Peter in 1 Peter 2:1. We will maintain the purity of God's word as taught by the apostle's in the First Century Church.
- We will not chasten or proselytize other churches or its members. However, we feel that today's "Christian" churches have drifted too far from God's model and have allowed secular culture to define their church thereby diluting or completely ignoring Biblical truth and doctrine. This is contrary

to Biblical truth. The church should define the culture. The culture should not define the church. Too many believers and churches seem to be guided by a truth that seems right in their own eyes (Deuteronomy 12:8; Judges 17:6, 21:25; Proverbs 12:15, 21:2) instead of relying on God's written, inspired Word.

- We will maintain a welcoming environment for people who want to grow in God's truth. "Therefore let us go on and get past the elementary stage in the teaching and doctrine of Christ, advancing steadily toward the completeness and perfection that belong to spiritual maturity. Let us not again be laying the foundation of repentance and abandonment of dead works and of the faith (by which you turned) to God." (Hebrews 6:1 AMP)
- Preach and share the truths found in the written, inspired word of God, the Holy Bible, being like the Berean's who received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. (Acts 17:11).
- We will be shepherds of the Church of God, which He bought with His own blood, (Acts 20:28; John 21:15-17; 1 Pet 5:1-2) and we will continue to feed the flock with God's Word. (John 21:15-17).
- We will encourage one another to live the example set by Jesus Christ and be accountable to God exemplifying and glorifying His word by conduct and deed.
- We believe the Bible in its entirety is the inspired revelation of God to man. Understanding Old Testament law and prophesy and New Testament fulfillment living God's unchanging law through the grace and completion of Jesus Christ. (Matthew 13:52; John 14:15, 21; 15:10; Isaiah 28:9-10). The Bible is the true basis of all Church doctrine. (Matthew 4:4; 2 Timothy 3:16).
- We believe the Bible, both Old and New Testament, is the inspired revelation and word of God to all of mankind. It is the true basis for all doctrine and teaching. (Matthew 4:4; 2

Timothy 3:16). We believe the Bible is the foundation for all truth and knowledge. (John 17:17)

- We proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. (Matthew 24:14; Acts 8:12). We must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and give Him glory. (2 Peter 3:18). We preach repentance and spiritual change so we, and those the Father sends us, may be prepared for the return of our Lord, Jesus Christ. (Ezekiel 33, to restore the people of God).
- Salvation is God's gift by grace and through faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior (Titus 3:5; Acts 4:12; Romans 5:10, 11). With true repentance and baptism God removes our past sins and we can begin the ongoing process growing in grace and knowledge of Christ (2 Peter 3:18). We understand our salvation is complete at the resurrection and we will be "born again" (John 3:3-7; 1 Corinthians 15: 50-54).
- Our goal is to practice and teach the tenets of the original Apostolic First Century Church. This includes honoring the true seventh day Sabbath and God's appointed Holy Days. Honoring God's Sabbaths unites us as a religious organization committed to God. Keeping God's Sabbaths is a sign between God and His people that we acknowledge Him as the LORD Who sanctified us. (Exodus 31:15, 17).
- We truly understand our duty and obligation to teach the truth of the word of God accurately acknowledging the penalties are great if we do not. (Matthew 5:19; Jeremiah 14:14-15). We also acknowledge we are obligated to obey God rather than men. (Acts 5:29).
- We are "non-trinitarian", meaning we do not believe in the traditional, manmade creation of a triune God or one God in three co-equal Persons. This "trinity doctrine" is not found anywhere in the Bible but is a combination of Greek, Roman and Jewish philosophies. We believe the Holy Spirit is the power of God. It is how God the Father and God the Son carry out Their will. It is through this Spirit we are guided through

conversion to the knowledge of all truth and other gifts essential for us to do His will.

Much of the way man worships today is not Biblically based. Many follow along as they have been taught, making the assumption that what they do and believe is right. They never take the time to really prove their beliefs. Are you following the Bible and God's Commandments or are you following *traditions*? Remember, Jesus addressed the issue of following *tradition* in Mark 7: 6-9 (AFV). "Well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honors Me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men.'" (See Isaiah 29:13). Are you worshipping in vain?

Most religion and worship is based on pagan influence in the early church of the 2nd and 3rd century. Jesus warned of false prophets in (Mat 24:4-5, 11, 24; Mark 13: 22) as did the Apostles Peter, Paul and John. (2 Cor 11:12-15; 1 Tim 1:3-7, 6:3-5, 20-21; 1 Peter 2:1-3; 1 John 4:1-3). Christians as early as 66 AD, and again in 132-135 AD, were suffering persecution at the hands of the Romans who made Judaism and the Way, as early Christianity was known, difficult in the empire. They tried to worship in secret, keeping weekly Sabbath's and the Holy Days, as Jesus and the Apostle's did, and outwardly worshipping the pagan ways of the Roman's so they would not call attention to themselves. By 325 AD, the time of Emperor Constantine's Council of Nicaea, the influence of pagan beliefs was deeply seated in the universal church.

At His last Passover meal with them Jesus told His Disciples He has given them an example and they should do as He had done to them (John 13:15). After His resurrection He told them to go to all nations and teach them to observe all things He commanded them

(Matt 28:19-20). Paul told the Corinthians to follow his example as he follows Christ (1 Cor 11:1). On Pentecost, after Jesus had ascended to heaven, Acts 2: 42 tells us, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship." Additionally, 1 John 2: 4, 6 states, "He that says, I know Him, and keeps not His commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in him. (6) He that says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk, even as He walked." "Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Tim 2:15).

As a child Jesus' and His family observed Sabbaths and Holy Days. They traveled to Jerusalem where, at age 12 Jesus spoke to the religious theologians in the temple astounding them with His knowledge. (Luke 2: 41-48).

When Jesus established His ministry He and the Apostles kept these same Sabbaths and Holy days as did the first century church after His ascension into heaven.

We are still required to keep God's Sabbath's and holy days. In Leviticus 23: 1-2, "The Lord spoke to Moses saying, Speak to the children of Israel, and say unto them, concerning the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim holy convocations, even these are my feasts." Notice, the Lord spoke to Moses..."concerning the feasts of the Lord ...these are My feasts". Please note two things, Moses was directed by God to speak to the children of Israel which included all 12 tribes that had come out of Egypt, not just the Jews. Secondly, God states twice these are His feasts, holy convocations. Nowhere does He say they are anyone else's feasts. Not mans or the children of Israel or the Jews. These were HIS feasts. In Leviticus 23 we are commanded to keep these feasts throughout our generations forever.

The *weekly 7th day Sabbath* (Shabbat) is the covenant sign between God and his children forever (Exodus 31:13; Ezekiel 20:12, 20). It identifies His people. During their captivity in Egypt the children of Israel forgot their ways of worship. After they left Egypt Moses began to renew their holy ways. Exodus 16: 23-29 shows Moses introducing Sabbath keeping to the children of Israel. Exodus 20: 8-11, gives us the fourth commandment, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." God set the specific day, blessed it and made it holy. In Exodus 31: 12-18, God told Moses, to speak unto the children of Israel (this included all 12 tribes and not all were Jews) telling them to keep God's Sabbaths because it was to be a sign between God and them throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. Also understand this was a reminder to them. God had already sanctified the seventh day and made it holy at the end of the creation week. God proclaimed the seventh day as the Sabbath. (Gen 2:1-3), "(3) And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from his work which God created and made." He set it apart as His own and hallowed it. This seventh day Sabbath has been in existence from the beginning. (See also Leviticus 23:1-3; Isaiah 58: 13-14)

From the beginning the days were numbered, 1 through 7. Naming of the days did not come until many centuries later when they were named after pagan gods. From Genesis forward the seventh day Sabbath was always on the seventh day. (Gen 2: 23; Exodus 31: 12-17; Lev 23: 3). Nowhere in the Bible does it change

this OR grant any man or church the authority to do so. Neither does it teach to keep any other day of the seven holy. No one has that divine authority except God. The seventh day is to be observed as the Sabbath day of rest. Not the sixth day, Friday or the first day, Sunday, regardless of the human reasoning behind it. These are days decided by and set aside by man, not God. Mark 2: 27-28, 6:2; John 9:14; Acts 16:13, 17:2, 18:4; Heb 4:4, all New Testament verses, speak of the Sabbath as observed by Jesus and the disciples. Jesus observed the seventh day Sabbath, as was his custom, Luke 4:21. Paul also did this, Acts 17:2, 18:4.

There is no Biblical authority to change the God ordained and sanctified seventh day Sabbath.

God's Overall Plan

God's weekly Sabbath's and holy days are annual memorials for things past and rehearsals for future events. As a shadow of things to come, so to speak. (Col 2:16-17). They reveal God's purpose and show the chosen their true identity, (1 Cor 15: 20-23; James 1:18). Together they lay the ground work for the return of Jesus Christ and His 1000 year reign on earth. They symbolize the various steps in God's plan. Each year as we keep the holy days we should be able to better understand God's plan of salvation for us. By keeping the weekly Sabbath's and these annual feasts and holy days we are able pass this knowledge on to each generation.

After Jesus was glorified His disciples had a more clear understanding of what had been written about Him and what was done to Him, (John 12:16). Peter understood God's time was a pattern. (2 Peter 3:8). From creation week there have been seven days in the week, six days to work and the seventh day to rest and honor and reflect on God. (Exodus 31:13, 16; Lev 19:30; Deut

5:14). Paul spoke of God's Sabbath rest in a more far reaching manner showing us there was to be a more peaceful time following this age, an extended Sabbath rest. (Heb 4:3-11)

Isaiah tells us that God is He who inhabits eternity. His concept of the dimension of time is vastly different than ours, (Isaiah 57:15). Peter explained God's reckoning of time, one day is a thousand years. John shows us that the millennial reign of Christ, after the first resurrection, is to be one thousand years, or one day in God's timing. (Rev 20:1-4). So this extended seventh day Sabbath rest is 1000 years, the first six days will have been the 6000 years of man's attempt to rule and govern himself since the fall from grace. Each day representing 1000 years in God's time.

Biblical charting shows there were approximately 4000 years from creation to the birth of Christ, His first coming. Approximately 2000 years have gone by since then, almost six of God's days. We seem to be approaching the time of Revelation 20.

God's plan is to bring man back into the glory He created us for. (Gen 1:26-27; Isaiah 46:9-11; Romans 8:28-29). Based on scripture we can look forward to:

The return of Christ as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords to set up his Millennial Kingdom, (Rev 19:1-21)

The small harvest of God's Firstfruits, the Saints who are to rule with Christ for the 1000 years, the first resurrection, (1 Cor 15: 20-23; Rev 20: 4)

Satan is to be bound for 1000 years and cast into the bottomless pit, (Rev 20: 1-3).

All others who have ever lived will be resurrected and be given a chance, 100 years, to accept the true God and receive

eternal life. Those who will reject this will be cast into the Lake of Fire, (Rev 20:11-15; Isaiah 65: 20-25; Ezekiel 37: 1-28).

After all these things come to pass God the Father will create a new heaven and a new earth, nothing ever tainted by Satan, and His chosen family will live and reign with Him for eternity, (Rev 21:1-27, 22:1-21; Isaiah 65:17-19).

An overview of the New Testament meaning of the Lord's Festivals:

Passover-Reminds us of Christ's suffering and death. The shedding His blood and His broken body for the sins of mankind. The Lamb of God sacrificed for us. John 1:29, 36; 1 Corinthians 5:7).

Feast of Unleavened Bread-This shows our life long task and duty to put sin out of our lives (1 Corinthians 5: 6-13; Luke 12:1). We need to grow in grace *and* knowledge (2 Peter 3:18) and put our sinful ways behind us.

Pentecost-Memorializes the giving of the Holy Spirit to believers and looks forward to the reaping of the Firstfruits, the little flock (Luke 12:32) of Gods family "harvested" at the first resurrection (Revelation 20: 4-5). Pentecost pictures this first, small spiritual harvest (James 1:18).

Feast of Trumpets-Signals a time of war and plagues and the second coming of Jesus Christ with the resurrected saints of the small harvest. (Matthew 24: 31; 1 Cor 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17).

Day of Atonement-This day pictures the binding of Satan in the bottomless pit for 1000 years so that he should deceive the nations no more (Rev 20: 3), the beginning of the

Millennial Kingdom and the reign of Jesus Christ and His saints.

Feast of Tabernacles-Pictures the Millennial, 1000 year, reign of Christ and His saints. The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord... (Isaiah 11:9).

Last Great Day-This represents the coming White Throne Judgement where the remainder of humanity, the previously unsaved, will have the opportunity to hear the Truth and accept salvation and eternal life. (Rev 20: 11-15).

These are the beliefs and tenets of the First Century Fellowship Ministry, A Biblical Church of God.

We pray you will be led to continue on with your studies. Our website is:

firstcenturyfellowship.org

There you will find additional Foundation Studies and a section, we believe,
that is unique to us,

Kidz Korner and Teen's Table

which is located in the Teachings section. You will find studies for teens and
pre-teens based on the adult sermons, as well as lesson plans and
worksheets for younger children.

We acknowledge our site begins the Foundation you will need to proceed in
God's truth. We are blessed to be able to present this.

For more advanced teachings and further growth, we recommend you check
Church at Home,

churchathome.org

This is a great site and is a natural next step in your growth. There are
video, audio and written studies and ALL are strictly Bible based.

A companion site to Church at Home is,

Truthofgod.org

Learning God's truth is not as simple as we may think. As noted in the
study, we have preconceived ideas after many years of worldly influence. If
you take these sites in the order above it will be like going from middle
school through high school and off to college and graduate school.

May our Heavenly Father continue to lead, and you continue to listen.