

# GOD'S SACRED CALENDAR

**G**OD'S sacred calendar is the true calendar for all mankind. Its principles go back to the very first chapter of the Bible, where the sun and the moon were appointed to be for signs, seasons, days and years (Gen. 1:14).

This is the calendar God gave to Israel when He led them out of the pagan practices of Egypt. It has been in continual use for over 3400 years. In all major respects except one, it is the same calendar used between Adam and Moses.

God gave the sacred calendar to Israel when He brought them out of Egypt. But our nation, composed (mainly) of the descendants of ancient Israel, rejects God's way. Our nation has gone back to observing the kind of calendar which our ancestors used during their slavery in Egypt.

But isn't our Roman calendar of Christian origin? Doesn't it have the approval of almost all Christian sects? History answers: "Our [Roman] calendar is not Christian in origin. It descends directly from the Egyptians, who originated the 12-month year, 365-day system. A pagan Egyptian scientist, Sosigenes, suggested this plan to the pagan Emperor Julius Caesar, who directed that it go into effect throughout the Roman Empire in 45 B.C. As adopted it indicated its pagan origin by the names of the months — called after Janus, Maia, Juno, etc. The days were not named but numbered on a complicated system involving Ides, Nones, and Calends. It was not until A.D. 321 that the seven-day week feature was added, when the Emperor Constantine [supposedly] adopted Christianity. Oddly enough for his weekdays he chose pagan names which are still used." (From "Journal of Calendar Re-

form," Sept. 1953, footnote p. 128.)

Further study brings one to the realization that the entire Roman calendar is of pagan origin with the single exception of the seven-day week feature. Ironically, the "Journal of Calendar Reform" would have men give up this feature also by adopting their World Calendar. This proposed calendar contains one day each year (two in leap years) that is not counted as a day of the week. The seven-day cycle of the week which has persisted since creation *would then be broken*. The World Calendar has features which look right to men, but in adopting it the one remaining feature of keeping time God's way — the weekly cycle — would be lost. It would be a totally heathen calendar.

## God Ordained This Way

The Sabbath, the calendar, and the law had to be made known anew to the children of Israel when God brought them out of the paganism of Egypt; for they had not been keeping the Sabbath, and had lost much of the knowledge of the true God and His way.

God has not changed. When He calls men out from the pagan practices of this world to the Christian way of life, He will reveal His Sabbaths, His way of keeping time, and His law. In delivering us from paganism, God reveals to us the ways He ordained.

A new year is to begin in the spring. "This month [Nisan or Abib] shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you" (Ex. 12:2). This first month of God's sacred calendar is called, in the Bible, Abib (Ex. 13:4). It means the month of "green ears." Later the Jews called it *Nisan* (Esther 3:7) — a Baby-

lonian word having a similar meaning.

The beginning of this month and of all God's months generally occurs at the appearance of the first faint crescent of the new moon in the west just after sundown (observed from the Holy Land). The astronomical new moon calculated for the United States is, in general, a day or two earlier.

Proof that the new moon begins the month is found by comparing Psalms 81:3 and I Chronicles 23:31 with Numbers 10:10; 28:11; 29:1 and Leviticus 23:24. The terms "beginning of the month" and "new moon" are used interchangeably.

The word *month* means "moon." A new month begins with a new moon. At first quarter the month is one quarter gone, at full moon half a month has passed.

A third unit of time, the *day*, was correctly observed by most people till only a few hundred years ago. The proper time to end one day and begin another, the way the Pilgrims followed, is in the evening at sunset as the rays of direct sunlight fade from the countryside. Notice the description of the Day of Atonement occurring on the tenth day of the month. "In the ninth day of the month at even [evening], from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath" (Lev. 23:32). Man's way has been to change to the practice of beginning the day at midnight.

The division of days was correctly understood at Christ's time. A Sabbath was drawing to a close. Those who wished healing waited, and "when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him," not being aware of the fact that Christ would have healed on the Sabbath day also (Luke 4:40). Mark records that they came to be healed

"when the sun did set" (Mark 1:32).

A comparison of Leviticus 22:7 with Leviticus 15:5 gives the exact moment for a new day — "when the sun is down." Individuals were considered free from their uncleanness at sunset.

The final division of time, the week with a seventh day set apart for rest and holy use, has been preserved for us by its continual observance. The Sabbath, the seven-day week, and all of God's ways were given to mankind at creation to be kept by all generations.

### The Meaning of the Holy Days

The first of God's holy days is the weekly Sabbath, which is a memorial of creation and also a symbol of the millennium or seventh thousand years in God's plan, when Christ will have put down all opposition and the Kingdom of God will rule this earth.

The Passover, Nisan 14, is a memorial of the death angel's passing over the homes of the Israelites in Egypt and sparing the firstborn.

The sacrifice of the lamb was a foreshadowing of Christ, the true Passover Lamb, and His sacrifice for our sins on that day. The Passover is now a memorial of both events.

The Feast, Nisan 15, commemorates the night on which Israel started out of Egypt. It is an annual Sabbath, on the first of the seven days of Unleavened Bread. These seven days begin at sundown. The seventh day is also an annual Sabbath commemorating God's final deliverance of Israel from Egypt (a type of sin) through the Red Sea. These seven days show our complete deliverance (seven denoting completeness) from sin.

The wave sheaf offering took place on the first day of the week (Sunday) during the days of Unleavened Bread. This ritual was the first day of the spring harvest season. It pictured Christ, the first of the firstfruits from the dead, being accepted by the Father before the early harvest (the Christians of these last 2000 years) could be reaped. The resurrection of Christ had occurred the previous Sabbath evening — near sunset; but the acceptance of His sacrifice by the Father did not occur till late in the

morning of "Sunday." Mary was not allowed to touch Him early in the day, yet later other disciples, after His acceptance, did touch Him (John 20:17; Matthew 28:9).

Pentecost, the fiftieth day of the spring harvest season, is always on a Sunday during Sivan, the third month; but the day of the month varies from year to year and must be counted. It — like every other holy day — begins at sundown. Pentecost symbolized the coming of the Holy Spirit and thus is a memorial of the beginning of the New Testament Church. In a larger sense it depicts the entire time of this New Testament Church from the arrival of the Holy Spirit till the soon-to-occur second coming of Christ, when the reaping of the first harvest of souls will occur.

The Feast of Trumpets, the first day of the seventh month (Tishri), points forward to that day when the last trumpet will sound and the dead in Christ rise to meet Him at His second coming. Christ will then put down the devil's rule and set up His Kingdom, the Kingdom of God, at Jerusalem, to spread progressively over all the peoples of the earth.

Nine days later on the 10th of Tishri is the Day of Atonement, picturing that day in the future when the responsibility for sin will be placed justly upon the head of the instigator of it, Satan the devil. Mankind will then become "at one," or in complete accord, with God, all our sins having been forgiven and forgotten. The 10th of Tishri is observed as a day of fasting, a day in which we afflict our souls by abstinence from food and drink.

The Feast of Tabernacles begins Tishri 15 at sundown and continues seven days through Tishri 21, the first day being an annual Sabbath. These seven days picture the millennium, when the resurrected Christians, then immortal, rule the earth under Christ.

The day following the Feast of Tabernacles is called the Last Great Day and is a symbol of a still more joyous occasion in the future. The rest of the dead, those never having had their eyes opened to the truth in their former life, will be resurrected to mortality after the millennium. They will go through

a time of trial and test pictured as the Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20. Those overcoming trial and temptation with the help of God's Holy Spirit will then be given immortality. A new heaven and new earth will follow, where no sin or wickedness can occur.

### General Information

In brief, God's holy days are to be kept in the following way. On the Day of Atonement no work of any kind is to be done. On the following six, no servile work is to be done (food, however, may be prepared): the Feast (Nisan 15), which is the first day of Unleavened Bread; the last day of Unleavened Bread; Pentecost; the Feast of Trumpets; the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day following the feast (Tishri 22). The Passover, Nisan 14, is observed with the service of footwashing followed by taking the symbols of unleavened bread and wine. This is the only festival that is not an annual Sabbath.

For Christians these holy days are convocations or commanded assemblies. Historians of the early Christian era record that these days, often misnamed "Jewish holidays," were kept by the Christians with a new spirit and a new and fuller understanding of their significance.

Holy days have been calculated for several years in advance (see chart on the next page).

Further information on many of the subjects mentioned but briefly in this article is available in booklet form. Just request *Pagan Holidays or God's Holy Days — Which?* □

THIS REPRINT ARTICLE IS NOT TO BE SOLD. It is provided as a public service in the public interest by Ambassador College made possible by the contributions of those who, voluntarily, have become co-workers in support of this worldwide work. Ambassador College, as a separate corporation, is associated with the Worldwide Church of God, and a portion of the financial needs of the work is supplied by that Church. The publishers have nothing to sell, and although contributions are gratefully welcomed, no solicitation is ever made to the public for financial support.

## THE ANNUAL FEAST DAYS OF GOD

Roman Year	First Day of Sacred Year Nisan or Abib 1	*Passover Nisan 14	Days of Unleavened Bread Nisan 15-21	**Pentecost Sivan	Feast of Trumpets Tishri 1	Day of Atonement Tishri 10	Feast of Tabernacles Tishri 15-21	The Last Great Day Tishri 22
1976	April 1	April 14	April 15-21	June 6	Sept. 25	Oct. 4	Oct. 9-15	Oct. 16
1977	March 20	April 2	April 3-9	May 22	Sept. 15	Sept. 22	Sept. 27- Oct. 3	Oct. 4
1978	April 8	April 21	April 22-28	June 11	Oct. 2	Oct. 11	Oct. 16-22	Oct. 23
1979	March 29	April 11	April 12-18	June 3	Sept. 22	Oct. 1	Oct. 6-12	Oct. 13
1980	March 18	March 31	April 1-7	May 25	Sept. 11	Sept. 20	Sept. 25- Oct. 1	Oct. 2
1981	April 5	April 18	April 19-25	June 7	Sept. 29	Oct. 8	Oct. 13-19	Oct. 20
1982	March 25	April 7	April 8-14	May 30	Sept. 18	Sept. 27	Oct. 2-8	Oct. 9
1983	March 15	March 28	March 29- April 4	May 22	Sept. 8	Sept. 17	Sept. 22-28	Sept. 29
1984	April 3	April 16	April 17-23	June 10	Sept. 27	Oct. 6	Oct. 11-17	Oct. 18

\* Observed the PREVIOUS evening after sunset. For example, in 1976 the Passover would be observed after sunset on the evening of April 13.

\*\* Pentecost (a Greek word signifying "fiftieth") is counted as the fiftieth day of the spring harvest season. It is always on a Sunday during Sivan, the 3rd month.