

Feast Days

“Christ was standing at the point of transition between two economies and their two great festivals. He, the spotless Lamb of God, was about to present Himself as a sin offering, that He would thus bring to an end the system of types and ceremonies that for four thousand years had pointed to His death. As He ate the Passover with His disciples, He instituted in its place the service that was to be the memorial of His great sacrifice. The national festival of the Jews was to pass away forever. The service which Christ established was to be observed by His followers in all lands and through all ages.” DA, pg.652

Change was in the air. That statement declared that the ceremonies of the Jews were about to end. The national festival of the Passover was about to pass away forever. Obviously, the rest of the feast days would go too. For a Jew, who had prided themselves in their divinely ordained ceremonies, this would be a hard pill to swallow. National pride would not allow them to give up these services easily.

Shortly after this, another shocking event occurred. “Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;” Matt. 27:50, 51 The earthly temple, the sanctuary services, were no longer valid and the means through which God would meet man. Now, man was to be pointed to the sanctuary in heaven where Christ would minister on man’s behalf. “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are* the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:” Heb. 9:24 This had been the heart of Judaism; this had been their all in all. How hard would it be for a Jew to accept such a message!

No better passages of Scripture portray the Jews response to such messages. When Stephen preached that the ceremonial laws, feast days, and the temple were no longer binding and valid, here was the response, “And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon *him*, and caught him, and brought *him* to the council. And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.” Acts 6:12-14 Stephen was

brought before the Sanhedrin to answer for his ‘blasphemy’. The result of his ‘blasphemy’ was death!!

One other element brought these issues to a head and formed the conflict about which the New Testament centered. The other element was the conversion of Cornelius, (Acts 10) and the Gentiles in general. What message would be communicated to the Gentiles? To what or Whom would they be pointed as the means of salvation? Paul’s message was very clear, “And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” 1 Corinthians 2:1, 2 There were other people preaching as well and their message was very different. These others were Jews who professed to be followers of Christ. They didn’t see what had come to an end by Christ’s death. Their message to the Gentile converts was, “And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, *and said*, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved...But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses.” Acts 15:1, 5

A decision would have to be made. Paul was preaching Christ and Him crucified. Others were preaching the ceremonial law, feast days, and circumcision. A council convened in Jerusalem and a decision was made. Acts 15:28,29 “For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.” “The Holy Spirit saw good not to impose the ceremonial law on the Gentile converts...The Gentile converts, however, were to give up the customs that were inconsistent with the principles of Christianity. The apostles and elders therefore agreed to instruct the Gentiles by letter to abstain from meats offered to idols, from fornication, from things strangled, and from blood. They were to be urged to keep the commandments and to lead holy lives. They were also to be assured that the men who had declared circumcision to be binding were not authorized to do so by the apostles.” AA, pgs. 194, 195

The Jerusalem council was very clear. The ceremonial law, which included circumcision, feast days, and sacrifices, was not binding on the Gentile converts. However, the 10

Commandments would remain in force as well as the health/dietary laws. As we can see throughout Paul's writings, some were not pleased with this decision. "Jerusalem was the metropolis of the Jews, and it was there that the greatest exclusiveness and bigotry were found. The Jewish Christians living within sight of the temple naturally allowed their minds to revert to the peculiar privileges of the Jews as a nation. When they saw the Christian church departing from the ceremonies and traditions of Judaism, and perceived that the peculiar sacredness with which the Jewish customs had been invested would soon be lost sight of in the light of the new faith, many grew indignant with Paul as the one who had, in a large measure, caused this change. Even the disciples were not all prepared to accept willingly the decision of the council. Some were zealous for the ceremonial law, and they regarded Paul with disfavor because they thought that his principles in regard to the obligations of the Jewish law were lax." AA, pg. 197

In Galatia, things got so bad that Paul told the Galatians that their reverence for circumcision, ceremonies, and the feast days was a perversion, a false gospel, and brought them under the control of demon spirits. "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." Galatians 1:6, 7 "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" **Gal. 3:1** "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years." Gal. 4:9, 10

The only thing in Judaism that had days, moons, times, and years connected together were the feast days! Paul called them 'beggarly elements'. To the church in Colossae, Paul told the believers that Christ blotted out those ordinances at the cross and because He did, there should be no judging of others over the feast days. "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*:" Col. 2:16 This element of Judaizers continued to seek to promote their forms and ceremonies and to discredit Paul throughout his ministry. Nevertheless, the gospel continued to ring true throughout the Mediterranean world and to go to every creature under heaven. Col. 1:23!

