

# The Ceremonial Law

PART ONE OF THREE

Several years ago, I prepared *The Truth about the Feast Days—Part 1-3 [WM-608-610]*, which many have found helpful. It contains a rather complete Bible study on each of the yearly feast days.

But the ceremonial law is, for some, a perplexing subject; and several requests have been received for a far more complete Spirit of Prophecy study on the subject and to what extent we are obligated, or even permitted, to keep the ceremonial laws today. The following Inspired statements may help clarify the matter.

*The key points, in the passages which follow, appear to be these:*

- Every Old Testament statute which pointed to the death of Christ (which therefore was a “shadow law”) was abolished at the cross.
- Circumcision, although it does not appear to directly point to the death of Christ, was also eliminated.
- By today keeping the ceremonial statutes which were “nailed to the cross” (Colossians 2:14-17 and Ephesians 2:11-15), we belittle Christ’s death on our behalf.

The Spirit of Prophecy rarely discusses the ceremonial law as a whole, without mentioning that its observance was abolished at the cross.

It should be noted that as soon as a type began to meet its antitype, the type was no longer to be kept. That is why, today, we do not keep the feast of trumpets, nor the day of atonement. Both began being fulfilled in the nineteenth century.

The first set of quotations, below, will be from the Conflict Series, since they provide our basic understanding of the subject. After that, quotations from other Spirit of Prophecy books will be given. A section on the feast of tabernacles will conclude the compilation.

## PATRIARCHS AND PROPHETS

“**The Passover was to be both commemorative and typical**, not only pointing back to the deliverance from Egypt, but forward to the greater deliverance which Christ was to accomplish in freeing His people from the bondage of sin. **The sacrificial**

**lamb represents ‘the Lamb of God,’ in whom is our only hope of salvation.** Says the apostle, ‘Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.’ 1 Corinthians 5:7. It was not enough that the paschal lamb be slain; its blood must be sprinkled upon the doorposts; so the merits of Christ’s blood must be applied to the soul. We must believe, not only that He died for the world, but that He died for us individually. We must appropriate to ourselves the virtue of the atoning sacrifice.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 277.

“**Yearly feasts were appointed**, at which all the men of the nation were to assemble before the Lord, bringing to Him their offerings of gratitude and the first fruits of His bounties. The object of all these regulations was stated: they proceeded from no exercise of mere arbitrary sovereignty; **all were given for the good of Israel.** The Lord said, ‘Ye shall be holy men unto Me’—worthy to be acknowledged by a holy God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 311.

“After the completion of the tabernacle He communicated with Moses from the cloud of glory above the mercy seat, and **gave him full directions concerning the system of offerings and the forms of worship** to be maintained in the sanctuary. The **ceremonial law** was thus given to Moses, and by him written in a book. But the **law of Ten Commandments** spoken from Sinai had been written by God Himself on the tables of stone, and was sacredly preserved in the ark.

“**There are many who try to blend these two systems**, using the texts that speak of the ceremonial law to prove that the moral law has been abolished; but this is a perversion of the Scriptures. **The distinction between the two systems is broad and clear. The ceremonial system was made up of symbols pointing to Christ, to His sacrifice and His priesthood. This ritual law, with its sacrifices and ordinances, was to be performed by the Hebrews until type met antitype in the death of Christ, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Then all the sacrificial offerings were to cease. It is this law that Christ ‘took . . . out of the way, nailing it to His cross.’** Colossians 2:14.

“But concerning the law of Ten Commandments the psalmist declares, ‘Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven.’ Psalm 119:89 . . . The law of God is as immutable as His throne. It will maintain its claims upon mankind in all ages . . . **While the Saviour’s death brought to an end the law of types and shadows, it did not in the least detract from the obligation of the moral law.** On the contrary, the very fact that it was necessary for Christ to die in order to atone for the transgression of that law, proves it to be immutable.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 364-365.

“The ceremonial law was given by Christ. **Even after it was no longer to be observed, Paul presented it before the Jews** in its true position and value, **showing its place in the plan of redemption and its relation to the work of Christ;** and the great apostle pronounces this law glorious, worthy of its divine Originator.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 367.

“On the fourteenth day of the month, at even, the Passover was celebrated, its solemn, impressive ceremonies commemorating the deliverance from bondage in Egypt, and **pointing forward to the sacrifice that should deliver from the bondage of sin. When the Saviour yielded up His life on Calvary, the significance of the Passover ceased, and the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper was instituted** as a memorial of the same event of which the Passover had been a type.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 539.

#### DESIRE OF AGES

“Thus **the law for the presentation of the first-born** was made particularly significant. While it was a memorial of the Lord’s wonderful deliverance of the children of Israel, **it prefigured a greater deliverance, to be wrought out by the only-begotten Son of God.** As the blood sprinkled on the doorposts had saved the first-born of Israel, so the blood of Christ has power to save the world.

“What meaning then was attached to Christ’s presentation! But the priest did not see through the veil; he did not read the mystery beyond . . . He did not think that this babe was He whose glory Moses had asked to see. But One greater than Moses lay in the priest’s arms; and **when he enrolled the child’s name, he was enrolling the name of One who was the foundation of the whole Jewish economy. That name was to be its death warrant; for the system of sacrifices and offerings was waxing old; the type had almost reached its antitype, the shadow its substance.**”—*Desire of*

*Ages*, 51-52.

“**All the ceremonies of the feast were types of the work of Christ.** The deliverance of Israel from Egypt was an object lesson of redemption, which the Passover was intended to keep in memory. **The slain lamb, the unleavened bread, the sheaf of first fruits, represented the Saviour.**”—*Desire of Ages*, 77.

“Then, said the angel, ‘He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week [seven years].’ For seven years after the Saviour entered on His ministry, the gospel was to be preached especially to the Jews; for three and a half years by Christ Himself; and afterward by the apostles. **‘In the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.’** Dan. 9:27. In the spring of A. D. 31, Christ the true sacrifice was offered on Calvary. Then the veil of the temple was rent in twain, showing that **the sacredness and significance of the sacrificial service had departed. The time had come for the earthly sacrifice and oblation to cease.**”—*Desire of Ages*, 233.

“He desired to call attention to the sacrifice that was to crown His mission to a fallen world. While the people were assembling at Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, **He, the antitypical Lamb, by a voluntary act set Himself apart as an oblation.** It would be needful for His church in all succeeding ages to make His death for the sins of the world a subject of deep thought and study. Every fact connected with it should be verified beyond a doubt. It was necessary, then, that the eyes of all people should now be directed to Him; **the events which preceded His great sacrifice must be such as to call attention to the sacrifice itself.**”—*Desire of Ages*, 571.

“The Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it . . . After the same manner also He took the cup’ . . . **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 . . . The ordinance of

the Lord's Supper was given to commemorate the great deliverance wrought out as the result of the death of Christ."—*Desire of Ages*, 652-653.

#### ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

"When the brethren in Judea heard that Peter had gone to the house of a Gentile and preached to those assembled, they were surprised and offended . . . Peter laid the whole matter before them. He related his experience in regard to the vision and pleaded that **it admonished him to observe no longer the ceremonial distinction of circumcision and uncircumcision**, nor to look upon the Gentiles as unclean."—*Acts of the Apostles*, 141.

"While the apostles united with the ministers and lay members at Antioch in an earnest effort to win many souls to Christ, **certain Jewish believers from Judea 'of the sect of the Pharisees' succeeded in introducing a question that soon led to wide-spread controversy in the church** and brought consternation to the believing Gentiles. **With great assurance these Judaizing teachers asserted that in order to be saved, one must be circumcised and must keep the entire ceremonial law.**

"**Paul and Barnabas met this false doctrine with promptness** and opposed the introduction of the subject to the Gentiles. On the other hand, many of the believing Jews of Antioch favored the position of the brethren recently come from Judea.

"The Jewish converts generally were not inclined to move as rapidly as the providence of God opened the way. From the result of the apostles' labors among the Gentiles it was evident that the converts among the latter people would far exceed the Jewish converts in number. **The Jews feared that if the restrictions and ceremonies of their law were not made obligatory upon the Gentiles** as a condition of church fellowship, the national peculiarities of the Jews, which had hitherto kept them distinct from all other people, would finally disappear from among those who received the gospel message.

"The Jews had always prided themselves upon their divinely appointed services, and many of those who had been converted to the faith of Christ still felt that since God had once clearly outlined the Hebrew manner of worship, it was improbable that He would ever authorize a change in any of its specifications. **They insisted that the Jewish laws and ceremonies should be incorporated into the rites of the Christian religion. They were slow to discern that all the sacrificial offerings had but prefigured the death of the Son of God, in which**

**type met antitype, and after which the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic dispensation were no longer binding.**"—*Acts of the Apostles*, 188-189.

"Before his conversion Paul had regarded himself as blameless 'touching the righteousness which is in the law.' Philippians 3:6. But since his change of heart he had gained a clear conception of the mission of the Saviour as the Redeemer of the entire race, Gentile as well as Jew, and **had learned the difference between a living faith and a dead formalism.** In the light of the gospel **the ancient rites and ceremonies committed to Israel had gained a new and deeper significance. That which they shadowed forth had come to pass, and those who were living under the gospel dispensation had been freed from their observance.** God's unchangeable law of Ten Commandments, however, Paul still kept in spirit as well as in letter.

"**In the church at Antioch the consideration of the question of circumcision resulted in much discussion and contention.** Finally, the members of the church, fearing that a division among them would be the outcome of continued discussion, decided to send Paul and Barnabas, with some responsible men from the church, to Jerusalem to lay the matter before the apostles and elders. There they were to meet delegates from the different churches and those who had come to Jerusalem to attend the approaching festivals. **Meanwhile all controversy was to cease until a final decision should be given in general council. This decision was then to be universally accepted** by the different churches throughout the country."—*Acts of the Apostles*, 190.

"At Jerusalem the delegates from Antioch met the brethren of the various churches, who had gathered for a general meeting, and to them they related the success that had attended their ministry among the Gentiles. **They then gave a clear outline of the confusion that had resulted because certain converted Pharisees had gone to Antioch declaring that, in order to be saved, the Gentile converts must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses.**

"This question was warmly discussed in the assembly. Intimately connected with the question of circumcision were several others demanding careful study. One was the problem as to what attitude should be taken toward the use of meats offered to idols. Many of the Gentile converts were living among ignorant and superstitious people who made frequent sacrifices and offerings to idols."—*Acts of the Apostles*, 191.

"The Gentiles, and especially the Greeks, were

extremely licentious, and there was danger that some, unconverted in heart, would make a profession of faith without renouncing their evil practices. The Jewish Christians could not tolerate the immorality that was not even regarded as criminal by the heathen. **The Jews therefore held it as highly proper that circumcision and the observance of the ceremonial law should be enjoined on the Gentile converts as a test of their sincerity and devotion.** This, they believed, would prevent the addition to the church of those who, adopting the faith without true conversion of heart, might afterward bring reproach upon the cause by immorality and excess.

“The various points involved in the settlement of the main question at issue seemed to present before the council insurmountable difficulties. **But the Holy Spirit had, in reality, already settled this question, upon the decision of which seemed to depend the prosperity, if not the very existence, of the Christian church.**”—*Acts of the Apostles, 192.*

“Once before, Peter had reasoned with his brethren concerning the conversion of Cornelius and his friends, and his fellowship with them. As he on that occasion related how the Holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles he declared, ‘Forasmuch then as **God gave them the like gift as He did unto us**, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; **what was I, that I could withstand God?**’ Acts 11:17. Now, with equal fervor and force, he said: ‘**God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us**; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. **Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples**, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?’ This yoke was not the law of Ten Commandments, as some who oppose the binding claims of the law assert; **Peter here referred to the law of ceremonies, which was made null and void by the crucifixion of Christ.**

“Peter’s address brought the assembly to a point where they could listen with patience to Paul and Barnabas, who related their experience in working for the Gentiles. ‘All the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.’

“James also bore his testimony with decision,

declaring that it was God’s purpose to bestow upon the Gentiles the same privileges and blessings that had been granted to the Jews.

“**The Holy Spirit saw good not to impose the ceremonial law on the Gentile converts, and the mind of the apostles regarding this matter was as the mind of the Spirit of God.** James presided at the council, and his final decision was, ‘Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God.’”—*Acts of the Apostles, 193-194.*

“In this instance James seems to have been chosen as the one to announce the decision arrived at by the council. **It was his sentence that the ceremonial law, and especially the ordinance of circumcision, should not be urged upon the Gentiles, or even recommended to them.** James sought to impress the minds of his brethren with the fact that, in turning to God, the Gentiles had made a great change in their lives and that **much caution should be used not to trouble them with perplexing and doubtful questions of minor importance, lest they be discouraged** in following Christ.

“**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.**”—*Acts of the Apostles, 195.*

“As a result of their deliberations **they all saw that God Himself had answered the question** at issue by bestowing upon the Gentiles the Holy Ghost; and **they realized that it was their part to follow the guidance of the Spirit.**”—*Acts of the Apostles, 196.*

“**Not all, however, were pleased with the decision; there was a faction of ambitious and self-confident brethren who disagreed with it.** These men assumed to engage in the work on their own responsibility. **They indulged in much murmuring and faultfinding, proposing new plans.**”—*Acts of the Apostles, 196.*

“Jerusalem was the metropolis of the Jews, and

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Continued from the preceding tract in this series

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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.”—*Acts of the Apostles, 197.*

“**The broad and far-reaching decisions of the general council brought confidence into the ranks of the Gentile believers, and the cause of God prospered.**”—*Acts of the Apostles, 197.*

“When Peter, at a later date, visited Antioch, he won the confidence of many by his prudent conduct toward the Gentile converts. **For a time he acted in accordance with the light given from heaven.** He so far overcame his natural prejudice as to sit at table with the Gentile converts. **But when certain Jews who were zealous for the ceremonial law, came** from Jerusalem, Peter injudiciously changed his deportment toward the converts from paganism . . . **The church was threatened with division.** But Paul, who saw the subverting influence of the wrong done to the church through the double part acted by Peter, **openly rebuked him** for thus disguising his true sentiments.”—*Acts of the Apostles, 197-198.*

“**Peter saw the error into which he had fallen,** and immediately set about repairing the evil that had been wrought, so far as was in his power. **God, who knows the end from the beginning, permitted Peter to reveal this weakness of character** in order that the tried apostle might see that there was nothing in himself whereof he might boast. Even the best of men, if left to themselves, will err in judgment . . . this record of the apostle’s weakness

was to remain as a proof of his fallibility . . . **The history of this departure from right principles stands as a solemn warning to men in positions of trust in the cause of God, that they may not fail in integrity, but firmly adhere to principle.** The greater the responsibilities placed upon the human agent, and the larger his opportunities to dictate and control, **the more harm he is sure to do if he does not carefully follow the way of the Lord.**”—*Acts of the Apostles, 198-199.*

“In his ministry, Paul was often compelled to stand alone. **He was specially taught of God and dared make no concessions that would involve principle.** At times the burden was heavy, but Paul stood firm for the right. **He realized that the church must never be brought under the control of human power. The traditions and maxims of men must not take the place of revealed truth.** The advance of the gospel message must not be hindered by the **prejudices and preferences of men,** whatever might be their position in the church.

“Paul had dedicated himself and all his powers to the service of God. **He had received the truths of the gospel direct from heaven,** and throughout his ministry he maintained a vital connection with heavenly agencies. **He had been taught by God regarding the binding of unnecessary burdens upon the Gentile Christians;** thus when the **Judaizing believers introduced into the Antioch church the question of circumcision, Paul knew the mind of the Spirit of God concerning such teaching** and took a firm and unyielding position **which brought to the churches freedom from Jewish rites and ceremonies.**”—*Acts of the Apostles, 199-200.*

“**These false teachers were mingling Jewish traditions with the truths of the gospel.** Ignoring the decision of the general council at Jerusalem, **they urged upon the Gentile converts the observance of the ceremonial law.**

“The situation was critical. **The evils that had been introduced threatened speedily to destroy the Galatian churches.**

“Paul was cut to the heart, and his soul was stirred by **this open apostasy** on the part of those to whom he had faithfully taught the principles of the gospel. He immediately wrote to the deluded believers, exposing the false theories that they had

accepted and with great severity rebuking **those who were departing from the faith.**—*Acts of the Apostles, 383-384.*

“From every quarter were coming accounts of the spread of **the new doctrine by which Jews were released from the observance of the rites of the ceremonial law** and Gentiles were admitted to equal privileges with the Jews as children of Abraham. Paul, in his preaching at Corinth, presented the same arguments which he urged so forcibly in his epistles. His emphatic statement, **‘There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision’** (Colossians 3:11), was regarded by his enemies as daring blasphemy, and they determined that his voice should be silenced.”—*Acts of the Apostles, 390.*

“In the earlier years of the gospel work among the Gentiles some of the leading brethren at Jerusalem, clinging to former prejudices and habits of thought, had not co-operated heartily with Paul and his associates. **In their anxiety to preserve a few meaningless forms and ceremonies,** they had lost sight of the blessing that would come to them and to the cause they loved, through an effort to unite in one all parts of the Lord’s work. Although desirous of safeguarding the best interests of the Christian church, they had failed to keep step with the advancing providences of God, and **in their human wisdom attempted to throw about workers many unnecessary restrictions.** Thus there arose a group of men who were unacquainted personally with the changing circumstances and peculiar needs met by laborers in distant fields, yet who insisted that they had the authority to direct their brethren in these fields to follow certain specified methods of labor. **They felt as if the work of preaching the gospel should be carried forward in harmony with their opinions.**”—*Acts of the Apostles, 400.*

“The liberal contributions lying before them added weight to the testimony of the apostle concerning the faithfulness of the new churches established among the Gentiles. **The men who, while numbered among those who were in charge of the work at Jerusalem, had urged that arbitrary measures of control be adopted, saw Paul’s ministry in a new light and were convinced that their own course had been wrong, that they had been held in bondage by Jewish customs and traditions, and that the work of the gospel had been greatly hindered by their failure** to recognize that the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile had been broken down by the death of Christ.

“This was the golden opportunity for all the lead-

ing brethren to confess frankly that God had wrought through Paul, and that at times they had erred in permitting the reports of his enemies to arouse their jealousy and prejudice. But instead of uniting in an effort to do justice to the one who had been injured, they gave him counsel which showed that they still cherished a feeling that Paul should be held largely responsible for the existing prejudice. They did not stand nobly in his defense, endeavoring to show the disaffected ones where they were wrong, but **sought to effect a compromise** by counseling him to pursue a course which in their opinion would remove all cause for misapprehension . . . ‘Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them; them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, **whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law’** . . .

“The brethren hoped that Paul, by following the course suggested, might give a decisive contradiction to the false reports concerning him. They assured him that the decision of the former council concerning the Gentile converts and the ceremonial law, still held good. **But the advice now given was not consistent with that decision. The Spirit of God did not prompt this instruction; it was the fruit of cowardice. The leaders of the church in Jerusalem knew that by non-conformity to the ceremonial law, Christians would bring upon themselves the hatred of the Jews and expose themselves to persecution.** The Sanhedrin was doing its utmost to hinder the progress of the gospel. Men were chosen by this body to follow up the apostles, especially Paul, and in every possible way to oppose their work. Should the believers in Christ be condemned before the Sanhedrin as breakers of the law, they would suffer swift and severe punishment as apostates from the Jewish faith.

“**Many of the Jews who had accepted the gospel still cherished a regard for the ceremonial law and were only too willing to make unwise concessions, hoping thus to gain the confidence of their countrymen, to remove their prejudice, and to win them to faith in Christ** as the world’s Redeemer. Paul realized that so long as many of the leading members of the church at Jerusalem should continue to cherish prejudice against him, they would work constantly to counteract his influence. He felt that if by any reasonable concession he could win them to the truth he would remove a great obstacle to the success of the gospel in other places. **But he was not authorized of God to concede as**

**much as they asked.**”—*Acts of the Apostles, 403-405.*

**“The apostle showed that religion does not consist in rites and ceremonies, creeds and theories.** If it did, the natural man could understand it by investigation, as he understands worldly things. Paul taught that religion is a practical, saving energy, a principle wholly from God, a personal experience of God’s renewing power upon the soul.

“He showed how **Moses had pointed Israel forward to Christ** as that Prophet whom they were to hear; how all the prophets had testified of Him as God’s great remedy for sin, the guiltless One who was to bear the sins of the guilty. He did not find fault with their observance of forms and ceremonies, but showed that **while they maintained the ritual service with great exactness, they were rejecting Him who was the antitype of all that system.**”—*Acts of the Apostles, 451-452.*

#### GREAT CONTROVERSY

**“The slaying of the Passover lamb was a shadow of the death of Christ.** Says Paul: ‘Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.’ 1 Corinthians 5:7. The sheaf of first fruits, which at the time of the Passover was waved before the Lord, was typical of the resurrection of Christ. Paul says, in speaking of the resurrection of the Lord and of all His people: ‘Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming.’ 1 Corinthians 15:23. Like the wave sheaf, which was the first ripe grain gathered before the harvest, **Christ is the first fruits** of that immortal harvest of redeemed ones that at the future resurrection shall be gathered into the garner of God.

**“These types were fulfilled,** not only as to the event, but as to the time. On the fourteenth day of the first Jewish month, the very day and month on which for fifteen long centuries **the Passover lamb** had been slain, Christ, having eaten the Passover with His disciples, instituted that feast which was to commemorate His own death as **‘the Lamb of God,** which taketh away the sin of the world.’ That same night He was taken by wicked hands to be crucified and slain. And as **the antitype of the wave sheaf** our Lord was raised from the dead on the third day, ‘the first fruits of them that slept,’ a sample of all the resurrected just, whose ‘vile body’ shall be changed, and ‘fashioned like unto His glorious body.’ Verse 20; Philippians 3:21.”—*Great Controversy, 399.*

#### OTHER BOOKS

**“God’s people, whom He calls His peculiar**

**treasure, were privileged with a two-fold system of law; the moral and the ceremonial.** The one, pointing back to creation to keep in remembrance the living God who made the world, whose claims are binding upon all men in every dispensation, and which will exist through all time and eternity. **The other, given because of man’s transgression of the moral law, the obedience to which consisted in sacrifices and offerings pointing to the future redemption. Each is clear and distinct from the other.**

“From the creation the moral law was an essential part of God’s divine plan, and was as unchangeable as Himself. **The ceremonial law was to answer a particular purpose in Christ’s plan for the salvation of the race. The typical system of sacrifices and offerings was established that through these services the sinner might discern the great offering, Christ.** But the Jews were so blinded by pride and sin that but few of them could see farther than the death of beasts as an atonement for sin; and when Christ, whom these offerings prefigured, came, they could not discern Him. The ceremonial law was glorious; it was the provision made by Jesus Christ in counsel with His Father, to aid in the salvation of the race. **The whole arrangement of the typical system was founded on Christ. Adam saw Christ prefigured in the innocent beast** suffering the penalty of his transgression of Jehovah’s law (*Review May 6, 1875*).”—*6 Bible Commentary, 1094-1095.*

**“The types and shadows of the sacrificial service, with the prophecies, gave the Israelites a veiled, indistinct view** of the mercy and grace to be brought to the world by the revelation of Christ. **To Moses was unfolded the significance of the types and shadows pointing to Christ.** He saw to the end of that which was to be done away when, **at the death of Christ, type met antitype.** He saw that only through Christ can man keep the moral law. By transgression of this law man brought sin into the world, and with sin came death. Christ became the propitiation for man’s sin. He proffered His perfection of character in the place of man’s sinfulness. He took upon Himself the curse of disobedience. **The sacrifices and offerings pointed forward to the sacrifice He was to make. The slain lamb typified the Lamb that was to take away the sin of the world.**

**“It was seeing the object of that which was to be done away,** seeing Christ as revealed in the law, that illumined the face of Moses. The ministration of the law, written and engraved in stone, was a ministration of death. Without Christ, the transgres-

sor was left under its curse, with no hope of pardon. The ministration had of itself no glory, but **the promised Saviour, revealed in the types and shadows of the ceremonial law**, made the moral law glorious.”—*1 Selected Messages*, 237.

**“In this ordinance [of the Lord’s Supper], Christ discharged His disciples from the cares and burdens of the ancient Jewish obligations in rites and ceremonies. These no longer possessed any virtue; for type was meeting antitype in Himself**, the authority and foundation of all Jewish ordinances that pointed to Him as the great and only efficacious offering for the sins of the world.”—*5 Bible Commentary*, 1139.

“The symbols of the Lord’s house are simple and plainly understood, and the truths represented by them are of the deepest significance to us. **In instituting the sacramental service to take the place of the Passover**, Christ left for His church a memorial of His great sacrifice for man. ‘This do,’ He said, ‘in remembrance of Me.’ **This was the point of transition between two economies and their two great festivals. The one was to close forever**; the other, which He had just established, was to take its place, and to continue through all time as the memorial of His death.”—*Evangelism*, 273-274.

“Paul desires his brethren to see that the great glory of a sin-pardoning Saviour gave significance to the entire Jewish economy. He desired them to see also that **when Christ came to the world, and died as man’s sacrifice, type met antitype**.

**“After Christ died on the cross as a sin offering the ceremonial law could have no force.** Yet it was connected with the moral law, and was glorious. The whole bore the stamp of divinity, and expressed the holiness, justice, and righteousness of God. And if the ministration of the dispensation to be done away was glorious, how much more must the reality be glorious, when Christ was revealed, giving His life-giving, sanctifying, Spirit to all who believe?”—*6 Bible Commentary*, 1095.

**“The passover pointed backward to the deliverance of the children of Israel, and was also typical, pointing forward to Christ, the Lamb of God, slain for the redemption of fallen man . . .** The passover had been observed to commemorate the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt. It had been both commemorative and typical. **The type had reached the antitype when Christ, the**

**Lamb of God without blemish, died upon the cross.**

**“He left an ordinance to commemorate the events of His crucifixion . . . Here our Saviour instituted the Lord’s supper**, to be often celebrated, to keep fresh in the memory of His followers the solemn scenes of His betrayal and crucifixion for the sins of the world. He would have His followers realize their continual dependence upon His blood for salvation.”—*3 Spiritual Gifts*, 225, 227-228.

**“There were those in Paul’s day who were constantly dwelling upon circumcision, and they could bring plenty of proof from the Bible to show its obligation on the Jews; but this teaching was of no consequence at this time; for Christ had died upon Calvary’s cross, and circumcision in the flesh could not be of any further value.**

**“The typical service and the ceremonies connected with it were abolished at the cross.** The great antitypical Lamb of God had become an offering for guilty man, and the shadow ceased in the substance. Paul was seeking to bring the minds of men to the great truth for the time; but **these who claimed to be followers of Jesus were wholly absorbed in teaching the tradition of the Jews**, and the obligation of circumcision.”—*6 Bible Commentary*, 1061.

“We can know far more of Christ by following Him step by step in the work of redemption, seeking the lost and the perishing, than by journeying to old Jerusalem. Christ has taken His people into His church. **He has swept away every ceremony of the ancient type. He has given no liberty to restore these rites, or to substitute anything that will recall the old literal sacrifices.** The Lord requires of His people spiritual sacrifices alone.”—*Review*, February 25, 1896.

**“The gospel of Christ reflects glory upon the Jewish age. It sheds light upon the whole Jewish economy, and gives significance to the ceremonial law.** The tabernacle, or temple, of God on earth was a pattern of the original in heaven. **All the ceremonies of the Jewish law were prophetic, typical of mysteries in the plan of redemption.**

**“The rites and ceremonies of the law were given by Christ Himself**, who, enshrouded in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, was the leader of the hosts of Israel; and this law should be treated with great respect, for it is sacred. **Even after it was no longer to be observed**, Paul pre-



# The Ceremonial Law

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

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sented it before the Jews in its true position and value, showing its place in the plan of redemption and its relation to the work of Christ; and the great apostle pronounces this law glorious, worthy of its divine Originator. **That which was to be done away was glorious**, but it was not the law instituted by God for the government of His family in heaven and on earth; for as long as the heavens shall remain, so long shall the law of the Lord endure.”—*6 Bible Commentary*, 1095.

“**In the place of the national festival which the Jewish people had observed, He instituted a memorial service**, the ordinance of feet washing and the sacramental supper, to be observed through all time by His followers in every country. These should ever repeat Christ’s act, that all may see that true service calls for unselfish ministry.”—*Evangelism*, 275-276.

“There is no discord between the Old Testament and the New. **In the Old Testament we find the gospel of a coming Saviour; in the New Testament we have the gospel of a Saviour revealed** as the prophecies had foretold. While **the Old Testament is constantly pointing forward to the true offering**, the New Testament shows that **the Saviour prefigured by the typical offerings has come**. The dim glory of the Jewish age has been succeeded by the brighter, clearer glory of the Christian age.”—*6 Bible Commentary*, 1095.

“In almost every church there were some members who were Jews by birth. **To these converts the Jewish teachers found ready access, and through them gained a foothold in the churches**. It was impossible, by scriptural arguments, to overthrow the doctrines taught by Paul; hence they resorted to the most unscrupulous measures to counteract his influence and weaken his authority. They declared that he had not been a disciple of Jesus, and had received no commission from Him; yet he had presumed to teach doctrines directly opposed to those held by Peter, James, and the other apostles. Thus the emissaries of Judaism succeeded in alienating many of the Christian converts from their teacher in the gospel. Having gained this point, **they induced them to return to the observance of the**

**ceremonial law** as essential to salvation. Faith in Christ, and obedience to the law of ten commandments, were regarded as of minor importance. **Division, heresy, and sensualism were rapidly gaining ground** among the believers in Galatia.

“Paul’s soul was stirred as he saw the evils that threatened speedily to destroy these churches. **He immediately wrote to the Galatians, exposing their false theories**, and with great severity rebuking those who had departed from the faith.”—*6 Bible Commentary*, 1108.

“**But there is a law which was abolished, which Christ ‘took out of the way, nailing it to His cross.’ Paul calls it the law of commandments contained in ordinances.’ This ceremonial law, given by God through Moses, with its sacrifices and ordinances . . . was to be binding upon the Hebrews until type met antitype in the death of Christ** as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world. **Then all the sacrificial offerings and services were to be abolished**. Paul and the other apostles labored to show this, and resolutely withstood **those Judaizing teachers who declared that Christians should observe the ceremonial law**.”—*Signs*, September 4, 1884.

“Paul . . . describes **the visit which he made to Jerusalem to secure a settlement of the very questions** which are now agitating the churches of Galatia, as to **whether the Gentiles should submit to circumcision and keep the ceremonial law**. This was the only instance in which he had deferred to the judgment of the other apostles as superior to his own. He had first sought a private interview, in which he set the matter in all its bearings before the leading apostles, Peter, James, and John. With far-seeing wisdom, he concluded that if these men could be led to take a right position, everything would be gained. Had he first presented the question before the whole council, there would have been a division of sentiment. The strong prejudice already excited because he had not enforced circumcision on the Gentiles, would have led many to take a stand against him. Thus the object of his visit would have been defeated, and his usefulness greatly hindered. But the three leading apostles, against whom no such prejudice existed, having themselves been won to the true position, brought the matter

before the council, and won from all a concurrence in the decision to leave the Gentiles free from the obligations of the ceremonial law.”—*6 Bible Commentary*, 1108.

**“The Jews refused to accept Christ as the Messiah, and they cannot see that their ceremonies are meaningless, that the sacrifices and offerings have lost their significance.** The veil drawn by themselves in stubborn unbelief is still before their minds. It would be removed if they would accept Christ, the righteousness of the law.

**“Many in the Christian world also have a veil before their eyes and heart. They do not see to the end of that which was done away.** They do not see that it was only the ceremonial law which was abrogated at the death of Christ. They claim that the moral law was nailed to the cross. Heavy is the veil that darkens their understanding. The hearts of many are at war with God. They are not subject to His law. Only as they shall come into harmony with the rule of His government can Christ be of any avail to them. They may talk of Christ as their Saviour; but He will finally say to them, I know you not. You have not exercised genuine repentance toward God for the transgression of His holy law, and you cannot have genuine faith in Me, for it was My mission to exalt God’s law . . .

**“The moral law was never a type or a shadow. It existed before man’s creation, and will endure as long as God’s throne remains.** God could not change or alter one precept of His law in order to save man; for **the law is the foundation of His government. It is unchangeable, unalterable, infinite, and eternal.** In order for man to be saved, and for the honor of the law to be maintained, it was necessary for the Son of God to offer Himself as a sacrifice for sin. He who knew no sin became sin for us. He died for us on Calvary. His death shows the wonderful love of God for man, and the immutability of His law.”—*6 Bible Commentary*, 1096-1097.

“This was an important era for the church. Though the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile had been broken down by the death of Christ, letting the Gentiles into the full privileges of the gospel, the veil had not yet been torn away from the eyes of many of the believing Jews, and **they could not clearly discern to the end of that which was abolished by the Son of God.** The work was now to be prosecuted with vigor among the Gentiles, and was to result in strengthening the church by a great ingathering of souls.”—*Story of Redemption*, 303-304.

“The death of Jesus Christ for the redemption of man lifts the veil and reflects a flood of light back hundreds of years, upon **the whole institution of the Jewish system of religion. Without the death of Christ all this system was meaningless.** The Jews reject Christ, and therefore their whole system of religion is to them indefinite, unexplainable, and uncertain. They attach as much importance to **shadowy ceremonies of types which have met their antitype** as they do to the law of the ten commandments, which was not a shadow, but a reality as enduring as the throne of Jehovah. **The death of Christ elevates the Jewish system of types and ordinances, showing that they were of divine appointment,** and for the purpose of keeping faith alive in the hearts of His people.”—*6 Bible Commentary*, 1097.

**“Paul . . . fully comprehended the difference between a living faith and a dead formalism.** Paul still claimed to be one of the children of Abraham, and kept the Ten Commandments in letter and in spirit as faithfully as he had ever done before his conversion to Christianity. But **he knew that the typical ceremonies** [conducted at the Temple in Jerusalem] **must soon altogether cease, since that which they had shadowed forth had come to pass,** and the light of the gospel was shedding its glory upon the Jewish religion, giving a new significance to its ancient rites.

“The question thus brought under the consideration of the council seemed to present insurmountable difficulties, viewed in whatever light. **But the Holy Ghost had, in reality, already settled this problem, upon the decision of which depended the prosperity, and even the existence, of the Christian church.** Grace, wisdom, and sanctified judgment were given to the apostles to decide the vexed question.

**“Peter reasoned that the Holy Ghost had decided the matter** by descending with equal power upon the uncircumcised Gentiles and the circumcised Jews. He recounted his vision, in which God had presented before him a sheet filled with all manner of four-footed beasts, and had bidden him kill and eat; that when he had refused, affirming that he had never eaten that which was common or unclean, God had said, ‘What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.’

“He said, ‘God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore **why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples,** which neither our fathers

nor we were able to bear?"

**"This yoke was not the law of the Ten Commandments, as those who oppose the binding claim of the law assert; but Peter referred to the law of ceremonies, which was made null and void by the crucifixion of Christ.** This address of Peter brought the assembly to a point where they could listen with reason to Paul and Barnabas, who related their experience in working among the Gentiles.

"James bore his testimony with decision—that God designed to bring in the Gentiles to enjoy all the privileges of the Jews. **The Holy Ghost saw good not to impose the ceremonial law on the Gentile converts;** and the apostles and elders, after careful investigation of the subject, saw the matter in the same light, and their mind was as the mind of the Spirit of God. James presided at the council, and his final decision was, 'Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God.'

**"It was his sentence that the ceremonial law, and especially the ordinance of circumcision, be not in any wise urged upon the Gentiles, or even recommended to them . . .** They saw that God Himself had decided this question by favoring the Gentiles with the Holy Ghost, and it was left for them to follow the guidance of the Spirit."—*Story of Redemption, 306-309.*

"The Jews were so exacting in regard to **ceremonial purity** that their regulations were extremely burdensome. **Their minds were occupied with rules and restrictions** and the fear of outward defilement, and they did not perceive the stain that selfishness and malice impart to the soul.

"Jesus does not mention this ceremonial purity as one of the conditions of entering into His kingdom, but points out the need of purity of heart."—*Mount of Blessing, 24.*

**"They held, and still hold, the mere husks, the shadows, the figures symbolizing the true. A figure for the time appointed,** that they might discern the true, became so perverted by their own inventions, that their eyes were blinded. **They did not realize that type met antitype in the death of Jesus Christ. The greater their perversion of figures and symbols, the more confused their minds became,** so that **they could not see the perfect fulfillment of the Jewish economy, instituted and established by Christ, and pointing to Him as the substance.** Meats and drinks and divers ordinances were multiplied until ceremonial religion constituted their only worship.

"In His teaching, Christ sought to educate and

train the Jews to see the object of **that which was to be abolished by the true offering of Himself,** the living Sacrifice."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education, 398.*

**"Christ's death and resurrection completed His covenant.** [See first half of Daniel 9:27.] Before this time, it was revealed through **types and shadows, which pointed to the great offering to be made by the world's Redeemer,** offered in promise for the sins of the world. Anciently believers were saved by the same Saviour as now, but it was a God veiled. They saw God's mercy in figures. The promise given to Adam and Eve in Eden was the gospel to a fallen race. The promise was made that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, and it should bruise His heel. Christ's sacrifice is the glorious fulfillment of the whole Jewish economy. The Sun of Righteousness has risen. Christ our righteousness is shining in brightness upon us."—*7 Bible Commentary, 932.*

#### THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

**There are several interesting facts about the feast of tabernacles.** It was also called the feast of ingathering, tents, or booths. (For more information, see 2 Chron 8:13; Ezra 3:4; Zech 14:16, 18-19; Jn 7:2. Also see Ex 23:16; Lev 23:34-36, 39-43; Deut 16:13-15; 31:10-13; Neh 8:1-18.)

- It is the only one of the yearly feasts that, so far, has been totally unfulfilled. This is because it is a type which comes after the day of atonement, and prefigures the Second Advent. It is truly a gathering for Advent believers.

- We are encouraged to keep something like it today. We are told that it should be a season of rejoicing. The emphasis, presented to us, is more on gathering together to sing and converse together, rejoice and encourage one another than to listen to sermonizing.

- Although it can be kept today, we are not commanded to do so. In addition, we are not told that, if kept today, it has to occupy a certain number of days or at a certain period of time. Thus, a yearly gathering, of some sort, with fellow believers would suffice. (The original began on the 15th of the seventh month [Tisri], and lasted seven days; later 8 days.)

It should be noted that we are never told to keep the typical feast of trumpets or the day of atonement. That is because we are today living during the antitype. We are now to be engaged in the antitypical work of spreading the final message everywhere while putting away sin and preparing our lives for the final atonement, when the Judgment

passes to our names (see *Great Controversy*, chapter 28; “*The Investigative Judgment*”).

“**In the seventh month** came the Feast of Tabernacles, or of ingathering. **This feast acknowledged God’s bounty** in the products of the orchard, the olive grove, and the vineyard. It was the crowning festal gathering of the year . . . **This feast was to be pre-eminently an occasion of rejoicing. It occurred just after the great Day of Atonement**, when the assurance had been given that their iniquity should be remembered no more. **At peace with God, they now came before Him to acknowledge His goodness and to praise Him for His mercy.** The labors of the harvest being ended, and the toils of the new year not yet begun, **the people were free from care, and could give themselves up to the sacred, joyous influences of the hour.** Though only the fathers and sons were commanded to appear at the feasts, yet, so far as possible, all the household were to attend them, and to their hospitality the servants, the Levites, the stranger, and the poor were made welcome.

“Like the Passover, the Feast of Tabernacles was commemorative. **In memory of their pilgrim life in the wilderness the people were now to leave their houses and dwell in booths, or arbors, formed from the green branches** ‘of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook.’ Leviticus 23:40, 42, 43.

“**The first day was a holy convocation, and to the seven days of the feast an eighth day was added** [in Neh 8:18], which was observed in like manner.

“**At these yearly assemblies the hearts of old and young would be encouraged in the service of God, while the association of the people from the different quarters of the land would strengthen the ties that bound them to God and to one another. Well would it be for the people of God at the present time to have a Feast of Tabernacles—a joyous commemoration of the blessings of God to them.** As the children of Israel celebrated the deliverance that God had wrought for their fathers, and His miraculous preservation of them during their journeyings from Egypt, **so should we gratefully call to mind the various ways He has devised for bringing us out from the world, and from the darkness of error, into the precious light of His grace and truth.**”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 540-541.

Is it possible that, following the death of Christ, if we today observe any ceremony pointing to the death of Christ, we crucify Him twice (Hebrews 6:6 refers to returning to sinful habits: “They crucify . . . the Son of God afresh”)? Moses’ great sin was striking the rock twice (PP 418:1). After the first time (PP 411), he was only to speak to it.

“**The Feast of Tabernacles was the closing gathering of the year. It was God’s design that at this time the people should reflect on His goodness and mercy.** The whole land had been under His guidance, receiving His blessing. Day and night His watchcare had continued . . .

“**This feast was not only the harvest thanksgiving, but the memorial of God’s protecting care over Israel in the wilderness.** In commemoration of their tent life, the Israelites during the feast dwelt in booths or tabernacles of green boughs. These were erected in the streets, in the courts of the temple, or on the housetops. The hills and valleys surrounding Jerusalem were also dotted with these leafy dwellings, and seemed to be alive with people.

“**With sacred song and thanksgiving the worshipers celebrated this occasion. A little before the feast was the Day of Atonement**, when, after confession of their sins, the people were declared to be at peace with Heaven. Thus the way was prepared for **the rejoicing of the feast.**”—*Desire of Ages*, 447-448.

“**The people of Israel praised God at the Feast of Tabernacles, as they called to mind His mercy in their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt and His tender care for them** during their pilgrim life in the wilderness. **They rejoiced also in the consciousness of pardon and acceptance**, through the service of the day of atonement, just ended.

“But when the ransomed of the Lord shall have been safely gathered into the heavenly Canaan, forever delivered from the bondage of the curse, under which ‘the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now’ (Romans 8:22), they will rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Christ’s great work of atonement for men will then have been completed, and their sins will have been forever blotted out.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 542.

“The time chosen for the dedication [of the rebuilt temple] was a most favorable one—the seventh month, when the people from every part of the kingdom were accustomed to assemble at Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. **This feast was pre-eminently an occasion of rejoicing.** The labors of the harvest being ended and the toils of the new year not yet begun, **the people were free from care and could give themselves up to the sacred, joyous influences of the hour.**”—*Prophets and Kings*, 37.