



"Experience is not what happens to a man; it is what a man does with what happens to him."

—Aldous Huxley

29-Mar-13

## Do Not Confuse the Lessons (Part Two)

In Part One, we saw that it is to our benefit if we keep the feasts of [God](#) in the way He instructs us in His Word. Even so, deleavening our homes and then traveling to a designated location to spend the entire Feast of Unleavened Bread with other brethren is not right or wrong in and of itself. However, doing on one holy day what God commands to be done on another because it *seems* right may cause us to miss the important lessons that God expects those with His Spirit to glean from that divinely appointed time. [The holy days](#) are God's gift of *meat in due season* ([Psalm 145:15](#)), and He in turn expects the ministry to reinforce that season's meaning ([Matthew 24:45](#)).

In the earlier days of the [Worldwide Church of God](#), the members did, in fact, keep the [Days of Unleavened Bread](#) as a seven-day festival away from their homes in a manner very similar to the way they kept and we still keep the [Feast of Tabernacles](#). However, after a time, Herbert Armstrong and those at headquarters came to realize that the fruit being produced by doing it this way was not good. They understood that God was showing them it was not practical to have God's people attempt to observe the two very different

feasts in the same manner. The fruit was obviously not good and certainly did not seem to be producing what God promises to those who faithfully do things the way that He says to do them.

One of the obviously bad consequences of keeping Unleavened Bread like Tabernacles was that many men in the church were losing their employment. They had to schedule their time off from work for both seven-day festivals, and back then, most employees did not receive nearly as much vacation time as they do today. So, their employers had to let them go. Having to look for new work, these men were endangering the livelihoods of their families. Even if they could get the time off, it was often unpaid leave, worsening already tough financial situations.

We know we step out in [faith](#) when we keep God's laws in a world that is enmity against Him ([Romans 8:7](#)). However, it was obvious to Mr. Armstrong and others that something was wrong in trying to apply God's instructions for one holy day to another. Those biblical instructions about making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the feasts ([Deuteronomy 16:16](#)) may have worked for ancient Israel, being a small agricultural society in which almost everybody was self-employed on farms and lived within two days walking-distance of Jerusalem. Today, though, nearly everybody works for others and are thus almost totally subject to an employer's decisions regarding when they must work.

The church leadership also noticed that attendance was very low on the days between the two holy days because many members and their families simply could not make it to services. Not only did adults have to work, but children also had to go to school, and some were being failed because of missing too many days from the classroom.

They also saw, upon carefully searching for God's will in this, that the Bible records no example of the Israelites keeping the Feast of Unleavened Bread with services each day. However, there is a scriptural example in Nehemiah 8 of the Feast of Tabernacles being kept with services on each day. In those days, after Nehemiah and the people had completed the wall around Jerusalem, the rejoicing Jews kept a great Feast of Tabernacles. Nehemiah's account reveals that "day by day, from the first day until the last day, [Ezra] read from the Book of the [Law of God](#). And they kept the feast seven days;

and on the eighth day there was a sacred assembly, according to the prescribed manner" ([Nehemiah 8:18](#)).

Therefore, since God commands that only the first and last days of Unleavened Bread are to be kept as holy convocations (see [Leviticus 23:6-8](#)), the leadership of the church wisely decided, based on the fruit, that it was best for the sake of the entire church to observe only the Feast of Tabernacles for its entire length. They chose to keep Tabernacles as a pilgrimage feast, traveling to where God has placed His name ([Deuteronomy 14:23](#)), because this festival highlights living in temporary dwellings ([Leviticus 23:42-43](#)). Considering all these things, God made it apparent that, under these present conditions, it was best to gather to observe only the two high days of Unleavened Bread.

One more point to consider is that ancient Israel could not see the broad picture that God gives to us in the holy days. He has graciously revealed this picture to us on whom the end of the ages has come. To the Israelites, the feasts were certainly religious in nature, but they may have actually kept them as little more than ritual harvest festivals, not realizing the deep spiritual meanings behind them. God, however, wants us to learn what they truly represent, the major steps in His Master Plan.

In that vein, we have to keep the holy days separate from each other. As the ministry and the people of the Worldwide Church of God grew in grace and knowledge, they saw that some of the important lessons concerning the feasts were being diluted or lost altogether in the process of trying to add to one what was unique to the other. Separating the holy times in their observance focused their meanings, enabling the church to glean even more insight into what God is doing with His converted children and in His overall purpose.

As God leads us by His Holy Spirit, and as we rehearse His holy days from year to year, God expects us to continue to submit to His direction, putting more of the pieces together and more correctly aligning our understanding with what He intends—and not with our own thoughts on the subject! We do well to remember from time to time the warnings He makes about adding or subtracting from His Word (see [Deuteronomy 4:2](#); [12:32](#); [Proverbs 30:6](#)).

In [Psalm 145:1-15](#), David extols many of God's wonderful attributes: His unsearchable greatness; His glory, honor, and majesty; His graciousness, compassion, mercy, mighty acts, and absolute power to uphold those who call upon Him and [love](#) Him. In verse 15, he writes, "The eyes of all look expectantly to You, and You give them their food in due season." Just as our amazing God provides all living things with physical food, He provides His people with spiritual sustenance at the right time. He does this most specifically in His feast days, and we must make sure that we do not confuse their lessons.

- Mark Schindler

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## **From the Archives: Featured Sermon**

### **[Baptized in the Sea](#)**

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Israel experienced a type of baptism in passing through the Red Sea on the last day of Unleavened Bread. The etymology of baptism - from the Greek baptizo (to immerse) from the root bapto (to dip), symbolizing death, burial, redemption, and resurrection (Romans 6:4) - requires the practice of total immersion. Baptism represents the destruction of our carnal selves and a resurrection to a new life. Baptism is not for children because one needs to be mature to understand its meaning and eternal consequences. It is a one-time event, a break-off point involving repentance (Acts 2:38) and commitment to a lifetime of bearing fruit, motivated by the power of God's Holy Spirit.

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## **From the Archives: Featured Article**

### **[God Our Provider](#)**

by Charles Whitaker

The story of building the Tabernacle serves as an encouraging example for us today as we collaborate with God in building His church. God will provide what we need to finish the job to His specifications!

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