

and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the Firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it," Leviticus 23:9-11.

This feast could not be observed until Israel marched out of the wilderness and into the Promised Land. When they had sowed their season of grain in the land, they were to watch for the first heading of the barley. When they would see stalks, they were to each cut enough to make a sheaf [bundle of grain plants]. This was then brought to the tabernacle, and the priest would offer it to the Lord. This was to be done on the First Day of the Week, following the first weekly Sabbath after the Feast of Unleavened Bread was completed. Thus, the Firstfruits has always been celebrated on Sunday. The Feast of Firstfruits is the last feast of the Passover Feasts – the end of slavery - redemption.

Reading from the book of John reveals that Jesus was celebrating the three feasts of Passover in Jerusalem. *"Then Jesus six days before the Passover came to Bethany [and ate supper with Lazarus, Martha, Mary, and His disciples] ... On the next day much people that were come to the Feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet Him, and cried, "Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord" ... And there were certain Greeks [Proselytes] among them that came up to worship at the Feast ... [Jesus said unto them] "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone: but if it die, it brings forth much fruit ... Now is the judgment of this world: Now shall the prince of this world be cast out" ... Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father... And [Passover] supper being ended ... He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments; and took a towel, and girded Himself. After that He poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet ... "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another ... And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself ... Peace I leave with you ... Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" ... When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden ... Judas [and] a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees ... led Him [Jesus] away to Annas ... the high priest ... Annas had sent Him bound unto Caiaphas ... Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the Hall of Judgment ... [the Jews] went not into the Judgment Hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might*

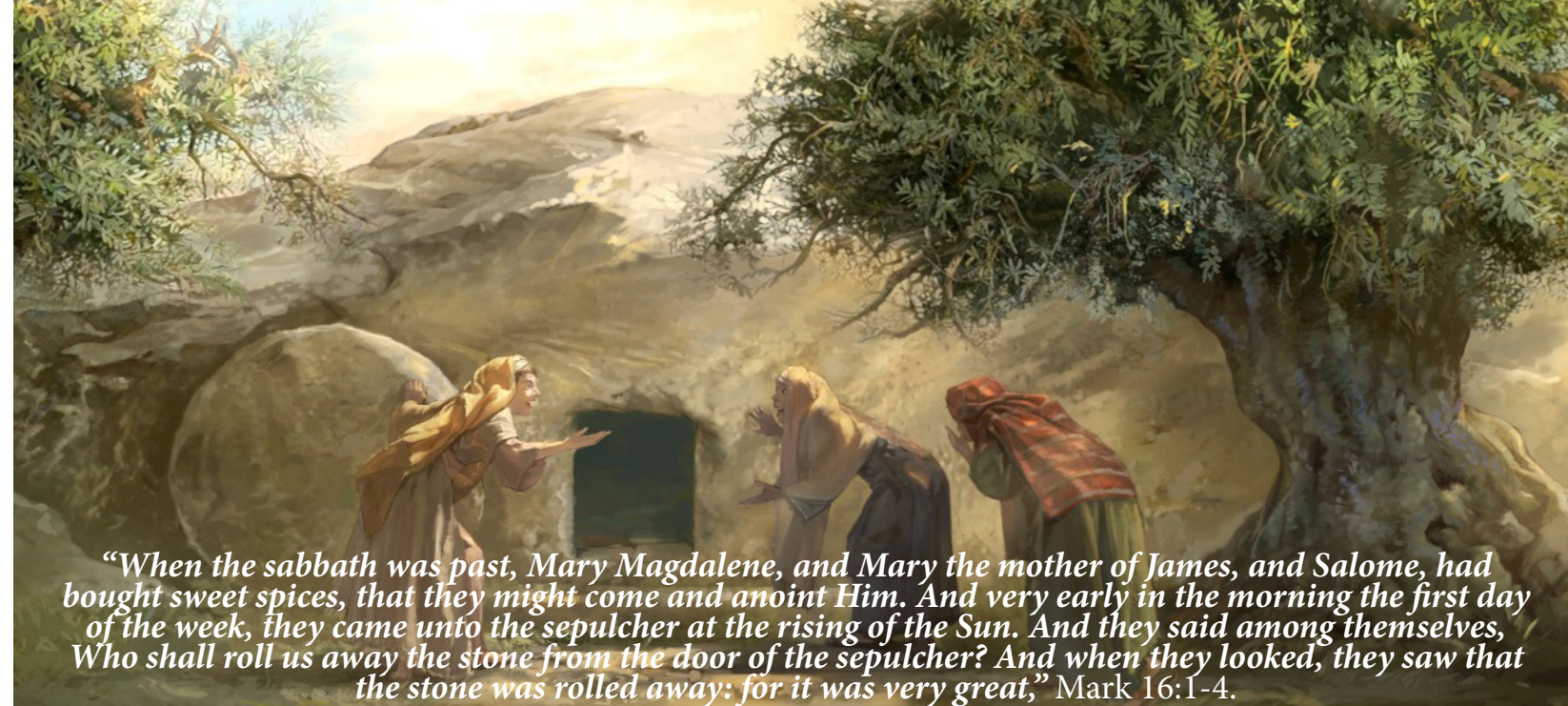
eat the Passover ... [Pilate said unto the mob of Jews] "ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the Passover" ... Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe ... [the mob of Jews cried out] "Crucify him, crucify him." Pilate said unto them, "Take ye Him, and crucify Him:" ... Then delivered he [Pilate] Him [Jesus] therefore unto them [the Jewish mob] to be crucified ... [They crucified Him] ... When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar [about the sixth hour], He said, "It is finished:" and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost. The Jews therefore, because it was the Preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day, (for that Sabbath day was an High Day) ... There laid they Jesus [in the tomb] therefore because of the Jews' Preparation day, ... In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the First Day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulcher. And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, "Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay," Matthew 28:1-6. "Then the same day at evening, being the First Day of the week ... Jesus [came] and stood in the midst [of the disciples] and saith unto them, "Peace be unto you: As My Father has sent Me, even so send I you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," John 12 - 20. [Emphases added]

The LORD knew from the beginning of time that man needed a Savior – from slavery – from sin – from himself. He provided Jesus to free us from all sins, all sicknesses, the curse upon the land, and every evil work of the devil. His time line is perfect, down to the day, the hour, and the minute. His redemption for us has come. His atonement for the nation of Israel is coming. Jesus is coming again. He is coming for a spotless church. He will come for the chosen tribe of Israel. **If you knew that Jesus was coming for you tomorrow morning at sunrise, how would you spend tonight?**

He is Blessed of the LORD, He is our Savior, and He is coming again – soon!

Your Brother in Christ Jesus;

Phillip Buttram



"When the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint Him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulcher at the rising of the Sun. And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulcher? And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great," Mark 16:1-4.

Maranatha - "Jesus is Coming Again!"

Greetings in the Name of our Soon Coming Savior;

This morning my spirit is full of Joy from the Holy Spirit, yet there is some heaviness in my heart. There is Joy because we serve the risen Savior, and His Father is our Father. We have the assurance that we will not see the wrath of God, but that we will live with Him in His Kingdom forever. Heaviness is in my heart because there are so many people walking in their own way who do not know the LORD as their Father.

There is one thing that I have noticed over the years, but had never given it much thought until lately. It all seemingly came together this morning during my time with my Father. Have you ever noticed how men change the Words of the LORD? This came to my attention, again, as I studied the Word concerning the Easter celebration of our Risen Savior. Remember how Jesus reprimanded the leaders of the Jewish faith for placing the undo burden of religion upon the nation? They were chastised for laying the heavy traditions of men on the Israelites instead of just teaching and following the Will, Word, and the Law of the LORD.

It is easy for us to sit here and play 'arm-chair Christians', condemning and criticizing them and others that didn't follow our LORD's commandments. I mean, after all – Jesus was the Christ. But think about it, changing the Word of the LORD is nothing new. It was the same in the Old Testament. Remember how the Israelites rebelled against God in the desert, want-

ing both to return to Egypt and to worship the gods that they had been worshiping in Egypt?

This morning, while in prayer, my Father reminded me that rebellion, and the distortion of God's Word goes back to the Garden, and even back before the creation of mankind. His Words were changed, ignored, added to, or taken from. *"Now the serpent was more subtle [sneaky snake] than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, 'Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?' [I don't think that this is the first time that this conversation came up.] And the woman said unto the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, 'Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die';" Genesis 3:1-3. Sounds pretty straight forward, doesn't it? 'Don't touch – don't eat – or you will die.' But that is not what the LORD said, "And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die';" Genesis 2:15-17. You may ask, 'Phillip, what is the problem? Eve quoted what God said, right?'*

The answer to that is 'yes' and 'no'. Eve did quote

MARANATHA - JESUS IS COMING AGAIN!

part of what the LORD said to Adam. Eve wasn't on the scene yet, so, she received the LORD's commandment from Adam. If we read what the LORD said, you see His commandment was to **"dress it and keep it"** – just **"don't eat of the 'Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil'"**. Eve said to satan that God said 'do not touch it.' Number one, God did not say that; number two, how can you 'dress it and keep it' without touching it? So, Eve added to the commandment to God's Word, isn't that just what the Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducee, and false prophets did? Where did this lying come from? **"How you are fallen from heaven, 'O Lucifer, son of the morning!'"** ... **"For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High,'"** Isaiah 14:12-14. For some reason, that I can't explain, only guess, it appears that satan had some influence over Eve, power of persuasion, for he is the father of all lies. Jesus said to the Pharisees, **"Ye are of your father the devil ... [he] abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it,"** John 8:44.

One thing Jesus did do, He spoke the truth. He spoke what He heard from His Father, and with kindness and love. He didn't mince words.

"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled," Matthew 5:18. This verse holds a lot in it, but, we don't have time to stop and camp-out here. John wrote, **"And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life, and out of the Holy City, and from the things which are written in this book,"** Revelation 22:19. **"What thing so ever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it,"** Deuteronomy 12:32 (Deuteronomy 4:2, Proverbs 30:6). And yet, that is just what the Jewish leaders did, and it is still being done in churches today. *[In my humble opinion, this is not a matter of updating words because our language usage changes, it is a matter of changing words to change the meaning of the context to align it with our agenda or beliefs. As we gain knowledge of Hebrew or Greek and obtain understanding of ancient text, the Lord can make clear to us His Words that were before difficult to comprehend, if we seek His face and not follow the teachings of men.]*

So, what does this have to do with the Celebration of

our Risen Savior on Easter morning? No matter what you read, what you listen to, or who preaches a sermon, sooner or later, you will be exposed to 'a non-truth,' either by omission, by distortion, by misunderstanding, or by the additions of the words of man or deleting the Words of God. For the most part, we, the Western World Christian – the Church, have not been taught the inner workings of the Hebrew language and its teachings. Thus, there is much misunderstanding, confusion, and partial teaching of the Old Testament. This is, in part, due to the fact that the Jewish calendar is different than the Julian Reformed Gregorian-based civil calendar. The Jewish calendar is based on three astronomical phenomena: the rotation of the Earth on its axis (a day); the revolution of the Moon around the Earth (a month); and the revolution of the Earth around the Sun (a year). These three phenomena are independent of each other, so there is no direct correlation between them. On average, the Moon revolves around the Earth in about 29½ days. The Earth revolves around the Sun in about 365¼ days, that is, about 12.4 lunar months. The civil calendar used by most of the world has abandoned any correlation between the Moon cycles and the month, arbitrarily setting the length of months to 28, 30 or 31 days. The Jewish calendar, however, coordinates all three of these astronomical phenomena. Months are either 29 or 30 days, corresponding to the 29½-day lunar cycle. Years are either 12 or 13 months, corresponding to the 12.4 month solar cycle. Why is this important? Because the Sabbaths laid out in Leviticus are based upon this cycle. You will see that the Moon, growing seasons, and the Sabbaths are a time line of seven (7) days, seven (7) weeks, and seven (7) months.

We read in Leviticus, Chapter 23 of the eight Sabbaths, of which, seven are appointed festivals of God given to the Israelites to be celebrated yearly, and one celebrated weekly – forever. These are covered in detail in other books, but here we see the order and timing.

1 – **The Sabbath** – the seventh day of the week for the tribe of Israel – a day of rest – wherever you dwell – forever;

(All of the following Feasts are High Holy Sabbaths which occur only once a year. All are joyous celebrations except for the Great Day of Atonement.)

2 – **The Festival of Passover** – the eve of the fourteenth day of the first month – the killing, cooking, and eating of the sacrificial lamb; a memorial of the tenth plague during their captivity in Egypt;

3 – **The Passover Festival of Unleavened Bread** – the day after the killing the sacrificial lamb, eating Unleav-

ened Bread and presenting a food offering unto the LORD for seven days with a sacred assembly (no work) on the seventh day;

4 – **The Festival Offering of Firstfruits** – an offering of the first grain (wheat or barley) single sheaf [bundle of harvested grain stalks] unto the LORD – to be done on the first day after the Sabbath (the low Sabbath – or the day of holy rest) – no new bread or roasted grain may be consumed until the first grain [Firstfruits] is sacrificed;

5 – **The Festival of Weeks** – fifty days after the Sabbath Day of Firstfruits – also called the fiftieth day – seven weeks of seven days after the feast of Unleavened Bread –



Day of Pentecost – [Greek meaning fifty] present a new offering of two loaves of new grain made with yeast (or leavened bread) – the priest is to wave both loaves (from one lump of dough) before the LORD (a wave offering) then sacrifice seven (7) spotless one-year old lambs, one bull, and two rams – proclaim a sacred assembly [convocation] – a sin offering (purification) of one male goat – two lamb offerings (peace offering) - no work;

6 – **The Festival of Trumpets** – on the first day of the seventh month – a Sabbath day of rest – commemorated with trumpet blast – present a food offerings to the LORD [Feast of Gathering];

7 – **The Day of Atonement** – the tenth day of the seventh month – an atonement offering is made to God – no work;

8 – **The Festival of Tabernacles** – (Feast of Booths) - the fifteenth day of the seventh month – after Fall crops are gathered – celebrate to the LORD for seven days – the first and eighth days are Sabbaths – branches are to be taken from trees and rejoice before the LORD – live in temporary shelters – a memorial to freedom from slavery – also called the Feast of the Ingathering.

All of these Sabbath days were ordained by God for the Jewish nation from that day until forever, even today. That is unless they accept Jesus as their LORD and Savior, or

until Jesus comes again and redeems the Chosen Tribe from their sins. Once we observe the Passover Lamb as our Savior, then we are freed from the curse of the Law and given a new Law of Love. At that point, every day is to be Holy for us.

It has been recorded how many traditions – festivals – rules – laws – and regulations were added by the leaders of their nation. The rules and man-made traditions became more important to the scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducee than the Law of the LORD.

Notice the beautiful structure and time of the LORD, and how everything fits into place concerning the Messiah.

All of the Holy Days are Sabbath Days;
All of the Sabbath Days are days of rest;
All of the Sabbath Days for the Israelites are forever;
All are a memorial of the moving of God for His people, past or prophetically;
All are called by more names;
All were proclaimed by God;
All follow the same time line of God.

Leaven is representative of sin, **"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth,"** 1 Corinthians 5:7-8.

-Israel's Passover in Egypt was the spotless lamb. Our Passover Lamb is Jesus Christ, killed on the same Holy Sabbath day;

-Israel's Holy Sabbath of the Festival of Unleavened Bread calls for the removal of all Leaven from their household for seven days, the spring cleaning of sin (dirt) from their house, our cleaning of sin from our lives with the burial of Jesus who bore our sins;

-Israel's celebration of The Offering of Firstfruits marked the end of the completion of God's plan for their freedom from bondage of slavery and the first fruit of the first (spring) harvest after entering the promised land; the raising of Jesus from the dead on the Sabbath of Firstfruits marked the completion of our freedom from bondage to sin and death, marking Him the FIRSTFRUITS [of many] of redemption.

-The Festival of Trumpets, The Day of Atonement, and The Festival of Tabernacles are all concerning the fall harvest, or times yet to come, the catching away of the church, the salvation of the Jewish nation, and Jesus being the Light of the World and the River of Living Water.

Easter is the High Holy Sabbath Day of FIRSTFRUITS! **"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you,**