

Deceived by Tradition

Do you know what was one of the greatest obstacles to Jesus Christ in his ministry? Those who study God's word know that the whole world is being deceived by Satan, Revelation 12:9, 'And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.' The only antidote to this deception can be found in the pages of the Bible, but there is a problem.

Today, many Christians are being taught that only the *New Testament* applies to them; the Old testament is redundant. The result is confusion, for without the Old it is impossible to understand the New, and visa-versa.

After all, Christ and His disciples had only the Old Testament to preach from, the New had not been written, and so when it was, its writers acknowledged that their teaching was based upon the Old Testament. 2 Timothy 3:16, 'All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realise what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.' NLT. The Apostle Peter confirms their dependence, 2 Peter 1:21 'For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.' NIV.

One criticism of the Old Testament is that its instructions are just for the Jews, not for Christians. But there were no Jews, who are the descendants of Judah, when God created the Sabbath, Genesis 2: 1-3, 'Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.' No wonder Mark 2:27 says that God made His Sabbaths for *mankind!* 'And he said to them, "The Sabbath was **made for man**, not man for the Sabbath.'"

Another misunderstanding is that the Jews are Israel. And yet, when the Jews are mentioned for the very first time in the Bible, they are at war with Israel! (2 Kings 16:5-6). So today where and who is Israel?

Israel fell into idolatry in the 700s BC, and God brought down the Assyrians upon them, who carried them away to Assyria as captives and slaves. Unlike the Jews who were later also carried away to Babylon, almost all of them never returned. And yet God had promised Abraham that they would become a great nation, as many as the stars in the sky and the sand in the sea. He further promised His grandson that they would become a nation and a company of nations, Genesis 35:10-11, 'And God said to him, "Your name is Jacob; no longer shall your name be called Jacob, but Israel

shall be your name.” So he called his name Israel. And God said to him, “I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply. **A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come from your own body**”.

Later, God detailed that promise to David, one of the Kings of Israel, that his kingdom would be an everlasting kingdom, and that his throne and the rule of his descendants from that throne over Israel, would eternally exist, Psalm 89:29, 36. ‘I will establish his offspring forever and his throne as the days of the heavens. His offspring shall endure forever, **his throne as long as the sun before me.**’

The Jews have no such throne, or kingdom, but that throne and its company of nations still exists today, and though over the centuries its people have largely forgotten their identity, it was widely known to the Victorians. If God’s word be true, that nation, with its Royal throne, would fulfil the many specific promises made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and David. And it did!

However, though that nation did receive the promises, and did carry the Bible to the far ends of its vast Empire, in its later loss of its origins under Satan’s deception, it turned away from God, rejected His word, and of the few Christians that remain there, many have been led to believe the Old Testament is only for the Jews. What a tragic deception for that nation and its Commonwealth, which is following down the same path. Sadly, even many of its Sabbath keepers have been deceived.

In fact, it had been God’s Plan that His chosen people Israel would act as His model nation and carry His Way and His Law to the whole world (and it still is). While they did this, (and its Bible based culture still lingers in many nations), He richly blessed them, and that small nation became Great, until they dominated the world, but after they accepted the *theory* of evolution, they rejected His word, and He began to remove those blessings. Their world straddling Empire was taken from them and they were betrayed by unwise and deceptive leaders until they are no longer Great, and only that “**company of nations**” remains, as a symbol of His remaining love.

So, we see that the whole Bible, including the Old testament with His instructions for His Creation mankind, is not just for the Jews, though *they* are still recognised as His People because they continued to keep the Sabbath. It is for All Israel, and it was, and is, intended for All mankind! And that is why, when Jesus Christ returns, one of the first things he will do is to command that All nations send their ambassadors up to Jerusalem each year to keep the Feast of Tabernacles! Why?

The Feast of Tabernacles represents the one thousand-year Sabbath rest here on the earth, and the rule of God through Jesus Christ and his Bride, the Saints. On Christ’s return from Heaven with His Bride, and after His victory at Armageddon, the representatives of all nations will come to Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles to see the fruits and blessings of following God’s Laws, which will quickly become apparent in Israel under Christ’s rule, and report back to their nations which will still remain in total chaos and desolation after the Great Tribulation, Zechariah 14:4-5,

‘And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and **the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.**’

You need to read the whole Chapter, but particularly verse 16-19, ‘And it shall come to pass, that **every one that is left** of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep **the feast of tabernacles.**’

This Feast represents the time when God will bring forth a great spiritual harvest through the worldwide teaching of his Way, Isaiah 2:2-4, ‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.’

The Bride of Christ, those of the much smaller Firstfruit Harvest **of the First Resurrection**, will work with the nations to achieve that goal, Isaiah 66:19. ‘And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those of them that escape unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the coastlands afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles.’ They will learn that Christ’s sacrifice on the cross has replaced the animal sacrifices of the old covenant, and, for those who repent, pays the penalty for their sins, so that they too may gain eternal life. Actually, the Feast of Tabernacles is just one of the 7 annual Holy Days of Leviticus 23, which picture the Plan of God for Mankind, and which will be taught and eventually observed by ALL in the Millennium.

Today, even amongst church-going, Sabbath keeping Christians, many do not understand this plain truth. I still find it hard to believe that, no matter how many times I have explained this to JW's who come to my door, they cannot see the simple truth of Zechariah 14, but sadly even Sabbath keeping, sincere Christians seem blind to these words too, because they suffer from the same blindness as the rest of Christianity. Instead of being open to God's plain word, **they look to their church traditions** first, the big mistake made by the Pharisees, which Jesus Christ so strongly condemned in Matthew 23 and Mark 7:8, '[And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.](#)' Yes, this was one of the greatest obstacles Jesus Christ faced in *His* ministry!

Don't they realise the great risk they are taking in denying God's clear words in Zechariah 14? God's command for **us** to keep this Feast is found in Leviticus 23:34. '[Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the LORD.'](#)' It is part of the list of commanded Holy Days; GOD'S FEASTS, not the Jews'! Leviticus 23:2, '[Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, These are the appointed feasts of the LORD that you shall proclaim as holy convocations; they are my appointed feasts.](#)'

The word "feasts" here is translated from the Hebrew word 'moed', Strongs no. 4150, defined as, "appointed time, place of meeting". These Holy Days of God are "holy convocations". The word 'convoke' means 'to arrange or call people to a large formal meeting.' So God calls His people to specific formal meetings with Him – His holy convocations'.

The first one listed is the 7th Day Sabbath, and that completely matches that definition, but it applies equally to the other 7 days in the rest of the chapter. These days are referred to as 'High Sabbaths' to distinguish them from the weekly sabbath, John 19:31, '[Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath \(for that Sabbath was a high day\), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.](#)'

You would perhaps think that Sabbath keepers would rejoice to hear about these days, but many of them still look instead to the erroneous traditions of their church, which blind them to the plain words of God in Zechariah 14, despite the warnings of Jesus Christ. Thus they reject God's Commands about the High Sabbaths, and risk falling into the condemnation of Revelation 22:19. '[and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book](#)'.

They are unaware that, as Israel, and Spiritual Israel if they are a Gentile Christian, they are told in Leviticus 23:29-31, with regard to the Day of Atonement, '[For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted \[by fasting\] in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people. And whatsoever soul it be that doeth any work in that same day, the same soul will I destroy from among his people. Ye shall do no](#)

manner of work: it shall be **a statute for ever** throughout your generations in all your dwellings’.

They are not aware that just as the 7th Day Sabbath was instituted at Creation, so were those Holy Days, the High Sabbaths. We have already learned that the Hebrew word for “feasts” is “moed”. Now turn to Genesis 1:14, ‘And God said, “**Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years.**”

The word here translated “seasons” is “moed”. Exactly the same word we saw in Leviticus 23:2. So this verse could be translated “**And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs to mark *My Holy Convocations* and for days and years.**”

The sun and moon are the ‘lights’; they determine the beginning of the year and the days of the month, and they tell us when God’s Holy Convocations are, [as it says here in Genesis 1], thereby proving that these ‘High’ Sabbaths, are, just like the 7th Day sabbath, for ALL mankind, not just the Jews! They are inseparable in validity with the weekly Sabbath!

Can you see how important Zechariah 14 is? Or, are you blinded by your church tradition, the tradition of men (or women) Christ condemned? Matthew 15: 3, ‘**He answered and said to them, “Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?**’ If so, figure out which tradition contradicts the plain words of Zechariah 14, compare it with All scripture and you will find the error, and maybe deceit.

The fact is that all humans make mistakes, even those God uses mightily. We must diligently check all we believe against Gods word, for it is the only antidote to deception by tradition, which can rob us of a glorious future in God’s kingdom.

.....