

THIRTIETH MESSAGE:
HOLY ASSEMBLIES FOR THE SABBATH DAY
AND FOR THE FIRST AND LAST DAYS OF THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD
Leviticus 23:1-8

Introduction

This MESSAGE is the first of five MESSAGES describing Israel's "appointments" with Jehovah." The "appointments" were also called "holy assemblies." They were times set aside for the Israelites to gather for worship all at one place (see comments on v. 2 below). The holy assemblies were to be held in connection with the weekly sabbath and in connection with certain annual celebrations. A total of seven annual celebrations are mentioned in these five MESSAGES. Five of the celebrations had been described to Moses in previous MESSAGES: **(1) the Passover** (Ex. 12:1-16, 21-28, 43-51; see comments on Lev. 23:3 below), **(2) the Feast of Unleavened Bread**, (Ex. 12:17-20; 13:3-10; 23:15; see comments on Lev. 23:4-8 below and on Lev. 23:10-14 in MESSAGE 31), **(3) the Feast of Harvest or Weeks** (Ex. 23:15; see comments on Lev. 23:15-21 in MESSAGE 31), **(4) the Feast of Ingathering or Booths** (Ex. 23:16; see comments on Lev. 23:24-36a in MESSAGE 34), and **(5) the Day of Coverings** (Lev. 16:1-34; see comments on Lev. 23:26-32 in MESSAGE 33). The second, third, and fourth of the celebrations had been set aside as times when all males in Israel were to gather before Jehovah for worship: (Ex. 23:14-17; 34:23). The other celebrations did not require the presence of all Israelite males, but the expectation was that as many as could attend should gather for those occasions. The other two of the seven annual celebrations are mentioned for the first time in these MESSAGES: **(1) the Memorial of Noise-Making** (see comments on Lev. 23:23-25 in MESSAGE 32), and **(2) the day following the Feast of Booths** (see comments on Lev. 23:36b in MESSAGE 34).

The purpose of this group of MESSAGES was to list the times when holy assemblies were to be held on the sabbath and during the annual celebrations. Holy assemblies were to be held on the weekly sabbath and during all of the annual celebrations except the Passover. The Passover was a family celebration, and it did not require gathering the people together in one large group. The emphasis of these MESSAGES is on the holy assemblies, but while describing the holy assemblies the MESSAGES also give information about the annual celebrations that had not been revealed previously. No mention is made in this MESSAGE of New Moon observances, because a holy assembly was not required on those days (Num. 28:11-15). Except for during the Babylonian captivity, the Israelites observed these special days of worship with relative accuracy until Rome destroyed the second temple. Afterward, the observances had to change because fire-offerings could not be offered without a temple. As a result, various traditions grew up concerning them. To understand God's true purpose in these observances, it is best to study God's original instructions concerning them.

Two of the occasions when holy assemblies were to be held are discussed in this first of the five MESSAGES: (1) the sabbath day (v 4), and (2) the first and last days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (vs. 5-8). The MESSAGE also mentions the Passover, but only to show that it was held just prior to the Feast of Unleavened Bread, because no holy assembly was required for the Passover. This MESSAGE is brief, because its purpose was not to fully describe the two occasions, but to identify them as occasions when holy assemblies were to be held. The next MESSAGE also specifies a holy assembly that was to be held on the second day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. That MESSAGE obviously is closely connected with this MESSAGE, though it was delivered to Moses separately.

It is likely that the five MESSAGES of this chapter were delivered to Moses all on one day. Their brevity and the familiarity the Israelites already had with most of the occasions made it easy for them to be delivered within the span of one day (see Theme under INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS). Why the information concerning the holy assemblies should have been broken up into five MESSAGES is a question we cannot answer. Possibly Moses was interrupted by events taking place on that day and had to stop listening several times to take care of some urgent matter and then return to hear the remainder of the instructions.

This MESSAGE may be outlined as follows:

	<u>Pages</u>
Introductory Note (23:1)	3-4
A. Holy assembly for the sabbath day (23:2-3)	4-5
B. Holy assemblies for the Feast of Unleavened Bread (23:4-8)	5-7

Critical Note

Advocates of the Development Theory of the Pentateuch point to three main items in Leviticus 23 that they believe support their position.

1. Many critics maintain that verses 2 and 4 say the same thing then use it as evidence that the two verses originated in separate manuscripts that were combined clumsily by a later editor to produce this chapter. That contention is unwarranted when the difference between the two verses is recognized by a little discernment. Verse 2 introduces all the times for special assemblies for worship, including the most important one on the weekly sabbath. Verse 4 on the other hand introduces the times for worship assemblies that were to be held at times scattered throughout the year. The point is that the sabbath occurred weekly, but the remaining celebrations were to occur annually. They were seasonal rather than weekly. This difference in the purpose of the two verses makes both needed and appropriate. The critics have created a solution to a problem that does not exist.

2. Critics find another supposed evidence for the Development Theory by comparing Leviticus 23 with Numbers 28-29. Both chapters list some of Israel's annual celebration, with two differences. The first difference is that Numbers 28:9-10 does not mention calling a holy assembly on the Sabbath, while Leviticus 23:2-3 does. The second is that the new moon celebration is mentioned in Numbers 28:11-15, but it is not mentioned at all in Leviticus 23. These two differences have become the springboard for a number of theories concerning the source and authorship of the two passages. Critics of the Development Theory suppose that the two passages came from different periods in the history of Israel, and, therefore, reflect different practices in the different periods.

A little attention to the distinctive emphasis of each of the two passages shows that such critical theories are unwarranted. The differences in the two passages were caused by differences in interest and emphasis, not by differences in source and authorship. Leviticus 23 contains a list of occasions when holy assemblies were to be held. Numbers 28-29 contains a list of fire-offerings that were to be offered in behalf of the nation on special occasions. Both passages deal with special occasions but from a different perspective and for a different purpose. It is only natural, therefore, that some facts important to one theme would have no part in the other passage and that therefore they should be omitted.

The fact that a holy assembly on the sabbath is not mentioned in Numbers 28 is simply explained by the fact that the emphasis of that chapter was not on holy assemblies. The failure to mention a holy assembly for the sabbath in Numbers 28-29 does not mean that one was not to be held then. It simply means that chapter was not discussing holy assemblies, but fire-offerings. Numbers 28-29 does not contradict the instructions of Leviticus 23:23. It simply talks about a different subject. Likewise, the failure of Leviticus 23 to mention the new moon celebration is easily explained because no holy assembly was to be held then. Special fire-offerings were to be offered on each New Moon, but holy assemblies were not required on each New Moon. A discerning reading of the materials as they exist would help many scholars avoid wasting their time and effort in elaborating unnecessary theories.

3. A third supposed evidence for the Development Theory is that the dates for the observance of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread are stated more specifically in this chapter and in Exodus 12:1-20 than they are in Exodus 23:25 and in Deuteronomy 16:1-18. Most critical scholars hold that the passages that mention the dates in more general terms must have been written in an earlier and more primitive time, while the passages that mention the more specific dates must have been written in a later and more advanced time. Thus, they have claimed the Feast of Unleavened Bread gradually developed in Israel over a period of many years. No such conclusion is necessary. As the materials occur in the text, the most specific statements about the dates are found in the first passage (Ex. 12:1-20). After the specific explanation of the dates in that MESSAGE, it was unnecessary to repeat that detail every time the occasions were mentioned. The details about the dates was simply assumed or summarized in some later references, though a more specific statement is found in Leviticus 23. This perfectly logical and simple explanation makes the long elaboration of critical theories about the slow development of these materials not only unnecessary but also foolish.

Interpretation

CHAPTER 23

Introductory Note (23:1-2)

Verse 1. **And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying,**

A new MESSAGE to Moses is introduced with this verse.

Verses 2. **Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, The appointments of Jehovah, which you must call holy assemblies, are these. [They are] appointments with me.**

Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them. This MESSAGE was to be relayed to “the sons of Israel.” It introduced a group of five MESSAGES that are recorded in Leviticus 23. Though this verse is a part of the first of the five MESSAGES, it introduces all five MESSAGES of this chapter and applies to them all. Likely all of these MESSAGES were spoken to Moses on the same day. Why information about a single theme was broken into five MESSAGES, we cannot know. Perhaps some rapidly changing events interrupted the instructions God was giving on that day and caused him to have to speak it to Moses in five different segments, each of which became a separate MESSAGE. Whatever the reason, the five MESSAGES all deal with one theme that all of the people needed to know about and observe.

The appointments of Jehovah. The theme of the five MESSAGES is the times when the people were to gather together to keep appointments with Jehovah. The word translated “appointments” is a noun based on a root that means “to designate,” “to assign,” or “to appoint.” The noun refers to a time appointed by Jehovah when people were to meet Him for worship.

The King James Version translates the word as “feasts” and that translation started a tradition that is still followed by most modern translations of the Scripture. Thus, most interpreters today understand the appointments to mean the annual celebrations in the Jewish religious year. Both the

translation “feasts” and the interpretation that applies this word to Israel’s Feasts are mistaken. For sure, the word “appointments” does not mean “feasts.” It occurs only five times in the whole Old Testament, and three of those times occur in Leviticus 23 (vs. 2,4,44).¹ When the remainder of verse 2 is read literally, it is clear that the “appointments” were not the annual festivals of Israel but times of worship during the festivals.

which you must call. The word translated “you must call” is often used in the Scripture to refer to proclamations that announce official decisions or commands. Thus, most English translations of this verse understand the word to refer to public proclamations calling the people to attend a Feast. However, that view requires the addition of extra words to make the expression have that meaning. KJV adds five words and notes those five words by printing them in italics: “*Concerning the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts.*” Sometimes added words are necessary to make Hebrew expressions make sense in English, but when the expressions make sense without added words, the additions can lead to misunderstanding. If the words are read literally as they are written, the expression actually makes better sense. It enables us to understand the word translated call, not as a proclamation, but as assigning a name to the gatherings. When the word first occurs in the Bible, it has that meaning (Gen. 1:5,8,10; 2:19; 3:20), and it has that meaning many other times throughout the Old Testament. The natural reading of the words of this verse means that God gave a name to the appointed times He set aside for worship.

holy assemblies are these. [They are] appointments with me. The name God gave to the appointed times for worship was “holy assemblies.” The word translated “assemblies” is a noun based on the same root as the verb that has just been used. The verb means “to call,” “to proclaim,” or “to

¹ The other two occurrences of the word are in 2 Chron. 30:22 and Zech. 8:19. In 2 Chron 30:22 it refers to eating slaughter-offerings during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. In Zech. 8:19 it refers to “cheerful celebrations” in a future time of restoration, and it is made equivalent to “rejoicing” and “gladness.” Both of these references refer to acts of worship, not to annual festivals.

convoke.” The noun means “a calling together of people,” “a convocation,” or “an assembly.” The appointments that Israel had with Jehovah were to be times when the people were to gather together before Jehovah. They were to be called “holy assemblies” because they were times set apart for Jehovah’s people to assemble to honor and worship Him.

Both the expression “appointments” and the name “holy assemblies,” refer not to annual festivals but worship gatherings. Some of those gatherings were to be during annual Feast times. Others were not. Holy assemblies were to be held during three annual Feasts: (1) the first, second, and last days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (see comments on vs. 6-8 below and on Lev. 23:10-14 in MESSAGE 31), (2) Feast of Harvest or Weeks (see comments on Lev. 23:15-21 in MESSAGE 31), and (3) the first day of the Feast of Ingathering or Booths (see comments on Lev. 23:35 in MESSAGE 34). Occasions when holy assemblies were to be held that were not Feast days were: (1) the weekly sabbath (see comments on v. 3 below), (2) The Day of Coverings (see comments on Lev. 23:27 in MESSAGE 33), (3) the Day of Noise-Making (see comments on Lev. 23:24 in MESSAGE 32), and (4) the day after the Feast of Ingathering (see comments on Lev. 23:36B in MESSAGE 34). An occasion when no holy assembly was required was the Passover (see comments on v. 5 below).

Both this chapter and Numbers 28-29 state that altar offerings were to be offered at each of the holy assemblies. Though this chapter does not specifically say that the assemblies were to be held at The Tabernacle, it was necessary to hold them there in order for the offerings to be offered. So the holy assemblies were to be times when people gathered near The Tabernacle and engaged in worshipping God though offering fire-offerings.

A. Holy assembly for the sabbath day
(23:3)

3 Six days work must be done, but on the seventh day [shall be] a sabbath of a sabbath, a holy assembly. You must not do any occupational work. It is a sabbath to Jehovah in all your dwellings.

The first and most important of the appointments of Israel with Jehovah was to be held neither during an annual observance nor during a Feast time. It was to be held weekly on the sabbath day. This verse contains the first mention of the weekly sabbath in the book of Leviticus, even though several occasions called “sabbaths” had been referred to twice in previous MESSAGES (see comments on Lev. 19:3,30 in MESSAGE 23). Also the Day of Coverings had been called a “sabbath of a sabbath” (see comments on Lev. 16:31 in MESSAGE 20 under the heading a sabbath of a sabbath it must be to you, and you shall afflict yourselves).

Though the sabbath day is mentioned in this MESSAGE first for the first time in Leviticus, it was far from a new concept. God made every seventh day a holy day when He first created and ordered the universe, because he ceased from his creative work on that day (Gen. 2:1-3). Creation was finished, and it was time to pause to consider its significance. Apparently worship on the seventh day was not observed regularly by early Jehovah worshipers, because it is not mentioned again in the book of Genesis. However, when God included observing the sabbath in the Ten Commandments, he based the command on His ceasing His creative work on the seventh day of Creation Week (Ex. 20:9-11). To God it had always been a holy day, regardless of whether His people observed it faithfully or not. By including observing the sabbath day in the Ten Commandments, Jehovah established the sabbath day as a basic moral principle for everyone. The fourth commandment establishes the sabbath day as more than a symbolic, ceremonial observance for Israel. It is a basic moral principle for all mankind. Even before speaking the Ten Commandments, when Jehovah first began to give the Israelites manna in the wilderness, he commanded that observing the sabbath day was to

be a regular practice among the Israelites. Its importance was strongly dramatized to them at that time by the special behavior of the manna on the sabbath day (Ex. 16:22-30)

In Exodus 31:12-17, Jehovah made the sabbath day to be a sign between Him and Israel, showing that Israel was His nation. As Israel observed the sabbath, they gave testimony to the fact that they were Jehovah's people. In Exodus 35:2-3, Jehovah commanded that in the nation of Israel death was to be the penalty for those who broke the sabbath. The death penalty was required because disregarding the sign of Israel's relationship to Jehovah was equivalent to rejecting Jehovah and the authority of His commandments. Death was the penalty for rejecting the covenant with Jehovah (see Introduction to MESSAGE 24 and comments on Lev. 20:2 in MESSAGE 24).

The new instruction concerning the sabbath day that is given in this MESSAGE is that a holy assembly was to be held each sabbath. Many writers have insisted that the sabbath of Israel was a time for family togetherness and that the idea of public gatherings for worship on the sabbath day did not begin until the Exile. This verse shows that contention to be false. From the beginning of Israel's life as a nation at Sinai, Jehovah set aside the sabbath for holy assemblies. The gathering of all Israelites to The Tabernacle every sabbath was not required and would have been impossible, but a holy assembly was to be held every sabbath for all who could attend.

At times, people have misinterpreted the purpose of the sabbath by emphasizing that the word "sabbath" means "rest." They have concluded it was a day set aside to do nothing. That impression is incorrect. The root of the word "sabbath" means "to cease." Jehovah specifically said that on that day the Israelites were to cease from secular activities so they could devote themselves to worshiping and serving Jehovah. He did not command them to cease from all activity (see comments on Lev. 16:31 in MESSAGE 20). The sabbath was not intended to be a day of inactivity but a day of active worship and service to Jehovah. However, this verse calls the seventh day "a sabbath of a sabbath," which means they were

not only to cease work at their occupation but also household work as well (see comments on Lev. 16:31 in MESSAGE 20 under the heading a sabbath it must be to you, and you shall afflict yourselves).

B. Holy assemblies for the Feast of Unleavened Bread (23:4-8)

Verse 4. **These [are] the appointments of Jehovah, holy assemblies, that you must call in their appointed times.**

This verse introduces appointed times when Israel was to gather for worship at specified times throughout the year. Like the statement in verse 2, it applies to all five MESSAGES recorded in Chapter 23. However, the statement in verse 2 is more all inclusive, including a holy assembly for the sabbath day along with those during the annual observances, whereas verse 4 introduces only the holy assemblies to be held during the annual observances. Verse 4 applies to all the annual observances during which holy assemblies were to be held, but this first MESSAGE discusses only two of them. The others are discussed in the remaining four MESSAGES of the chapter.

Verse 5. **Jehovah's Passover [is] in the first month on the fourteenth day of the month between the two evenings.**

Jehovah's Passover [is]. The Passover was an annual observance to commemorate when Jehovah passed over the homes that smeared the blood of a lamb around the entrance to their homes on the night of the tenth plague on the Egyptians. On that night, Jehovah entered all other homes in Egypt and killed their firstborn as the tenth and final plague on the Egyptians for refusing to allow the Israelites to go free. He passed over the homes where the residents had smeared the blood of a lamb around the entrance. That night the Egyptians urged The Israelites to leave their land, and the Israelites left in haste. The Passover was to be an annual observance to commemorate that wonderful night. It was to be observed by Israelite families in their homes, because it commemorated a time when families were spared. It was not a time for public

assemblies, because they had had no time for assemblies the night they left Egypt.

The Passover had been instituted by Jehovah at the time of Israel's liberation from Egypt (Ex. 12:1-14,21-28,43-49). It also had been mentioned in connection with the renewal of the covenant after the incident of the Golden Calf (Ex. 34:25). It is mentioned in this chapter only because of its connection with the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The Passover was not under discussion here, because no holy assembly was to be held on that day. The only reason for mentioning the Passover in this MESSAGE was to identify the date of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which followed it immediately.

In the first month on the fourteenth day of the month. The date of the Passover already had been given in Exodus 12:18. It is restated here as the fourteenth day of the first month. According to Exodus 13:4, the first month was the month Abib. The name of the month means "budding," and no doubt the name was drawn from the budding of trees and plants in the spring of the year. After the exile, the Israelites called the first month "Nisan," probably adopting a Babylonian name for that month (Neh. 2:1; Est. 3:7). The Israelites began their months with the new moons. The month Abib had been made to be the first month in the religious calendar of Israel because it was the month in which the Israelites had been delivered from Egypt and in which they began as a nation (Ex. 12:1; 23:15; 34:18; Deut. 16:1). It happened that that month began on the new moon closest to the spring equinox. In relation to our calendar, it began about the middle of March, but the exact date varied in relation to our calendar because it was set by the new moon. It is important to note, however, that this month was the first month of Israel's religious calendar that was used to date religious occasions. Before the Israelites left Egypt, they already had used a secular calendar, which they continued to use for dating secular events. Both calendars continued to be used in Israel, one to date religious events and the other to date secular events. The secular year began in the seventh month of the religious calendar, and it usually occurred in our month of September, depending on when the new moon occurred (see

Theme under INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS and comments on Lev. 23:23-25 in MESSAGE 32).

between the two evenings. Jehovah not only specified the day when the Passover was to be observed, but also the time of day. He already had defined the time of day in Exodus 12:6, and it is repeated here. In Hebrew, the word "evenings" had a dual ending, meaning "two." The two evenings were most likely sunset and darkness. "Between the two evenings" was dusk, when the sun has set but its light still shines over the horizon before total night has set in. The Israelites were to eat the Passover lamb at that time of day, because that was the time when they ate hastily as they prepared to leave Egypt.

Verses 6-8. **6 And the Feast of Unleavened Bread to Jehovah [is] on the fifteenth day of that month. You must eat unleavened bread [for] seven days.**

7 On the first day you must have a holy assembly. You must not do any occupational work.

8 And you shall present a fire-offering to Jehovah seven days. On the seventh day [is] a holy assembly. You must not do any occupational work.

And the Feast of. In the title "Feast of Unleavened Bread," the Hebrew word for "Feast" is used for the first time in Leviticus, though it had been used a number of times in Exodus. King James Version uses the translation "feasts" for the word in this verse and for the Hebrew word in verses 2 and 4 that means "appointments." Using the same translation for both words is misleading, because the two Hebrew words are entirely different. The word translated "Feast of" in this verse means a happy religious festival. Jehovah applied it to certain annual celebrations He instituted for the Israelites, but the word also was applied to some pagan religious festivals which were not approved by Jehovah (Ex. 10:9; 32:5; Jud. 21:19-21; 1 Kings 12:32; Isa. 30:29). Jehovah applied it to the following great religious festivals of Israel: Passover (Ex. 12:14; 34:25), the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Ex. 13:6; 23:15; 34:18; Lev. 23:6; Num. 28:17; Deut. 16:16; II Chr. 8:13; 30:13,21; 35:17; Ezra 6:22; Eze. 45:21,23), the

Feast of Weeks or Harvest (Ex. 23:16; 34:22; Deut. 16:10,16; II Chr. 8:13), the Feast of Ingathering or Booths (Ex. 23:16; 34:22; Lev. 23:34,39,41; Num. 29:12; Deut. 16:13,14,16,31:10; I Kings 8:2,65; 12:32; II Chr. 5:3; 7:8,9; Ezra 3:4; Neh. 8:14,18; Eze. 45:25; Zech. 14:16,18,19), and the Memorial of Noise-Making (Ps. 81:3). It was not applied to the new moon observance in Israel, because it was not an occasion for gatherings of the people. It also was not applied to the Day of Coverings, because that day was an occasion for sorrowful repentance rather than joyous thanksgiving.

Unleavened Bread. After mentioning the date of the Passover, Jehovah went on to his real purpose, which was to identify the first of the seasonal appointments at which Israel was to observe special assemblies for worship. This first seasonal appointments in the year were to be held during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. That Feast was a week long observance to commemorate the haste with which the Israelites left Egypt. They ate unleavened bread during that observance because they had left Egypt in such haste that they had not had time to allow their bread to rise before baking it. Though they ate unleavened bread, it was to be a happy time of rejoicing because it celebrated their liberation from Egypt.

[is] on the fifteenth day of that month. You must eat unleavened bread [for] seven days. These words clearly identify the Feast in question to be the Feast of Unleavened Bread by stating that it was to begin on the fifteenth day of the first month, an instruction that had been given when Jehovah first commanded its observance (Ex. 12:18). This verse only briefly summarize the most outstanding features about the Feast of Unleavened Bread, because they had already been presented in full in previous MESSAGES. The observance had first been commanded when the Israelites were liberated from Egypt (Ex. 12:15-20; 13:3-10). It also had been mentioned in the civil laws of Israel (Ex. 23:14-15) and at the renewal of the covenant after the incident of the Golden Calf (Ex. 34:18,23). Both Exodus 23 and Exodus 34, stated that it was to be one of the three times in the year when every male in Israel was to present himself before Jehovah at The Tabernacle. This verse simply repeats the name, date, and length of the observance to identify

it clearly and then proceed to emphasize the main point of the MESSAGE, which was the holy assemblies that were to be held during the Feast.

On the first day you must have a holy assembly. You must not do any occupational work. The point of this MESSAGE was to command that holy assemblies were to be held on the first and last days of the week of the Feast. First it specifies that one of the holy assemblies was to be held on the first day of the Feast. Many activities might occur during the seven days of the Feast, but of supreme importance was that the Feast should begin with a gathering of all the people for worship. The Feast of Unleavened Bread was one of the three occasions in the year when every Israelite male was to “appear before Jehovah” (Ex. 23:14-17). The first day of the Feast was to be a massive gathering of the whole nation, especially all the men of the nation, to thank God for delivering them from Egypt and for bringing them to a time of plenty and joy. The Israelites were to cease from their work at earning a living and spend the day worshiping and praising God. It was to be a sabbath day, even though the word “sabbath” is not used.

And you shall present a fire-offering to Jehovah seven days. Even though holy assemblies were not required on all seven days of the Feast, fire-offerings were to be offered in behalf of the nation on every day of the Feast. The specific offerings to be presented are not named here; however, they were described later in a special MESSAGE on the subject that is found in Numbers 28:19-24. No doubt, many or most Israelites would also use it as an occasion to offer their own fire-offerings to express the spiritual experiences they were sharing with God.

On the seventh day [is] a holy assembly. You must not do any occupational work. A holy assembly also was to be held on the last day of the Feast. It was also to be a sabbath day, so the people would take time out from their daily occupations to praise and worship God.

Application

The observance of a weekly rest from secular work is now held by Christians on the first day of the week in commemoration of both the creation and the resurrection of Jesus. Observing that day should be considered to be more than a helpful ceremony. It is a basic principle in the moral law of God. Failure to observe the sabbath or the Lord's Day keeps the minds of people constantly occupied with worldly concerns. People who do not observe the Lord's Day do not take time to enjoy God's presence or to ponder His commandments. Consequently they live more and more by their own erroneous thinking. More and more pagan ways grow among them, and eventually they become so corrupt that they deserve nothing but banishment from all God's blessings. Holy gatherings on the Lord's Day to worship and to serve God and His son Jesus Christ are a fundamental necessity for the preservation of the spiritual life of an individual and a nation.

The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread are not and never were a part of God's moral law. They were memorial celebrations, important to Israel as the nation chosen by God. Before Jesus came, they were obligations for the Israelites to remind them of what God had done for them and to encourage them to continue to trust in Him. Christians are not obligated to observe either the Passover or the Feast of Unleavened Bread. However, Christians can gain much from understanding their meanings. They teach Christians that just as God provided deliverance and protection for Israel, He will do the same for any person who trusts his life to Jesus. He also will bless any nation that honors Him and lives by His teachings. God provides deliverance both physically and spiritually for every person who trusts in Him sincerely. Each Christian should take time to remind himself or herself of times when God delivered him or her and thank God for those times of deliverance and blessing. When we remember what God did for us in the past, we are inspired to renew our commitment to Him in the present and to continue to depend on Him for aid in every new trial we face.

Though Jesus did not command any set seasons in the year for us to remember His goodness, He taught us to be grateful and worshipful every day of our lives. However, He did give us one observance that calls us to remember His goodness. That observance is the Lord's Supper. Concerning the Lord's Supper, He said, "This do in remembrance of Me." When we observe the Lord's Supper we first should remember Jesus' death for us on the Cross. We should also remember the many ways He has blessed our lives and make a new commitment of ourselves to Him. However, the Lord's Supper is not the only time when we should remember His goodness, especially His goodness in dying for us on the Cross. Both individual Christians and churches need to seek times in the midst of every year to remind themselves of God's gracious gifts in the midst of every year.