

# Passover and Holy Day Observances since the First Century

By Craig M White  
Version 2.11

*"A nation [or Church] that forgets its past has no future." (Winston Churchill)*

Were the holy days observed by Christians since the first century?  
If so, is there definite proof for these observances over the centuries?  
This chart aims to demonstrate that holy day observances  
did continue for centuries since the Apostles

**Other articles and charts in this series:**

- *Amazing Temple Symbolism found in Revelation Chapter 3*
- *Collection of Notes on Church of God Groups*
- *Greenberry George Rupert: A Significant Church of God Leader*
- *Greenberry George Rupert: Man of God*
- *Herbert W Armstrong: Man of God*
- *Herman L Hoeh: Salute to a WCG Pioneer*
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- *Just what do you mean 'Laodicean Church'?*
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## Introductory Remarks

Recently (April 2018) I was prompted to assemble this chart after receiving a series of e-mails about whether the holy days listed in Leviticus 23 were observed after the first century and whether this was traceable. My readings over many years suggested that such holy day observance longevity can be demonstrated.

This was something that I had thought to do on a number of occasions for 20 or more years, but I had other priorities. One of the hinderances was that 90-95% or so of my library has been in storage for many years – proofs for tracing holy day observance (outside of Jewish observance) would be contained therein. However, I have endeavoured to do what I can and hopefully produce something helpful on the topic.

Much has been written on tracing the history of Sabbatarians century-by-century by a number of authors and especially Seventh-day Adventists and Seventh Day Baptists. They have produced large books and charts to this effect which the Churches of God have based their formative historic research upon (such as *Facts of Faith, Truth Triumphant* and *Sabbath of God through the Centuries*). This article does not duplicate the efforts of these and other authors tracing the history of Sabbatarians. Rather it is devoted to finding evidence of Passover and holy day observance and documenting it but does not purport to find an unbroken line of holy day observers.

While proofs abound that Sabbatarians have persisted every century since the first, we should ask ourselves:

1. Which groups were genuine and which were off-track, cultic and weird? Did we always interpret these groups correctly?
2. How much information on these groups has been lost or misinterpreted? How much misrepresented? What have scholars discovered in recent times about fringe sabbatarian groups?
3. Did the various groups 'morph' one into the other progressively? Were there times that God also raised up new Works independently?
4. Did any of these groups observe the biblical holy days and were they observed each century since the first?

Since the Christ and the first apostles, God's people have continued His way of life and system of beliefs to the best they could with the understanding they had at that time. They may not have had our sense of organizational unity nor, as far as can be determined, did they call themselves 'Church of God' except in the very occasional song book or on a church hall building. They went under other names.

In this regard, we should acknowledge that these groups lost truth due to their scattering and persecution. That from time-to-time there were revivals of the Work represented by the various church eras (which we can also term as phases, epochs, or stages). It is interesting that as one reads

Herman Hoeh's booklet *A True History of the True Church*, he apparently equates each era with a new Work of God arising (Note: Hoeh realized that there were errors in the booklet and it was withdrawn from circulation. Nevertheless, it contains much important historical information and concepts to hold on to).

The doctrines we hold on to includes the observing of the holy days and belief in seven restorations of the Work, also known as seven church eras.

Honest Protestant scholars and other observers admit that the early church observed the Sabbath, holy days, and such like and that later these people became known as the Nazarenes. One such scholar is Troy Martin:

"The references to time in Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians exclusively reflect the adoption of a Jewish Calendar. Even in a place like Corinth, Paul speaks of the first day for Sabbath (1 Cor 16.2), not the day of sun. He builds an elaborate argument based upon the festivals of Passover and unleavened bread (1 Cor 5.6-8) in order to exhort the Corinthians, 'Let us keep the festival' (1 Cor 5.8). Although the temporal references in Paul's letters are sparse, **1 Corinthians provides strong evidence for the Pauline adoption of the Jewish practice that marked time by Festivals and Sabbaths.**" ("Pagan and Judeo-Christian Time-Keeping Schemes in Gal 4.10 and Col 2.16," *New Testament Studies*, vol 42, no 1, 1996:105-19). [emphasis mine]

Another scholar notes the following concerning the early church:

"Daily and weekly private and congregational worship attempted to fulfil needs formerly met by the function of priests in the temple. Baptism became still more important than before, assuming more responsibility for cleansing from sins, but it did not make circumcision unnecessary. There continued to be scripture reading and exhortation in congregational worship services. Some of them observed the same calendar of feasts as the majority of Jews and also the Jewish Sabbath, but they adhered to the Lord's Day and perhaps some of them even concurred with Gentile-Christians in their Christian adjustments to the old agricultural calendar. **Jewish-Christians of the second century were in closer agreement with the theology of the NT and Jews of their day than they would have been with Catholic Christians who lived a few centuries later.**" (George Wesley Buchanan, "Worship, Feasts and Ceremonies in the Early Jewish-Christian Church," *New Testament Studies: An International Journal*, Vol. 26, No. 3:297) [emphasis mine]

With the above in mind as background, following is a chart demonstrating holy day observance over the centuries; in this chart I document Sabbatarian groups and non-Sabbatarian groups which observed the Passover and holy days since the early church.

**Chart: Holy day observances since the first century**

Century	Religious Organisation or person	Source	Comment
First	Early Church	Luke 2:41-42; John 2:6; 7:14; Acts 2:1; 18:20-21; 20:16; 27:9; I Cor 5:7-8; 16:8	Refer to <i>Holy Day charts</i> available online at <a href="http://www.friendsofsabbath.org">www.friendsofsabbath.org</a>
Second	Polycarp	Pionius in <i>Life of Polycarp</i> , Chapter 2. Translated by J. B. Lightfoot, <i>The Apostolic Fathers</i> , vol. 3.2, 1889, pp. 488-506 <sup>i</sup>	He is accepted as successor to the apostle John and some believe he was part of or associated with the Nazarenes. In addition to observing Passover on the 14 Abib and Unleavened Bread, it is reported that he also observed the Feast of Tabernacles. <sup>ii</sup>
	Nazarenes	<i>The Historic Phenomena and Theology of the Nazarenes and Ebionites</i> , pp. 1-2 <sup>iii</sup>	Observed all holy days. According to Acts 24:5 the early church was known as the Nazarenes.
Third	Nazarenes	As above	Observed all holy days
Fourth	Nazarenes	As above	Observed all holy days
	Ebionites	<i>Lost Christianities— The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew</i> by B D Ehrman	Observed all holy days. Dependent on the source, they were more Judaic than the Nazarenes and Ebionite was an umbrella term for a number of heretical sects. <sup>iv</sup>
Fifth	Nazarenes?		Some sources have them continuing for several centuries.
Sixth	Nazarenes?		
Seventh	Paulicians of Armenia	<i>The Key of Truth</i> , pp. clxii, clii, 186 <sup>v</sup>	Observed Passover and Pentecost (also practiced water baptism and were non-trinitarian). Many non-Church of God scholars believed that they later developed into the Bogomils and Waldenses.
Eighth	Paulicians of Armenia	As above	Observed all holy days
Ninth	Paulicians of Armenia	As above	Observed all holy days
Tenth	Paulicians of Armenia	As above	Observed all holy days
Eleventh	Pasagini of	<i>An Ecclesiastical History: Ancient and</i>	Observed the holy days and other OT

Century	Religious Organisation or person	Source	Comment
	Lombardy	<i>Modern</i> , p. 333 <sup>vi</sup>	laws.
<b>Twelve</b>	Pasagini of Lombardy		
<b>Thirteenth</b>	Seeking information		
<b>Fourteenth</b>	Seeking information		
<b>Fifteenth</b>	Waldenses	<i>History of the Christian Church</i> by William Jones <sup>vii</sup>	Some Waldenses observed the Sabbath and Passover. <sup>viii</sup>
<b>Sixteenth</b>	Transylvanian sabbatarians	<i>The Beliefs and Practices of the Church of God in Transylvania During the Middle Ages, 1588-1623</i> , by Gerhard O. Marx <sup>ix</sup>	Observed all holy days. Other references: "The Sabbath-Keepers of Transylvania," (magazine supplement) <i>Messiah Magazine</i> by DT Lancaster; and "The Sabbatarians of Hungary," <i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i> , vol 2, 1 July 1890. <sup>x</sup> Highlights of Marx's paper by Richard Nickels may be found in the endnotes. <sup>xi</sup>
<b>Seventeenth</b>	Transylvanian sabbatarians	As above	Observed all holy days
	John Traske	"The fourteenth of the March moon to coincide with the Jewish Passover, and should be followed by the eating of unleavened bread for seven days." <sup>xii</sup>	An English Sabbatarian from which sprung the groups that became known as Sabbatarian Baptists, Church of Christ, and eventually Seventh Day Baptists.
	Charleston congregation of the French Protestant Church	<a href="http://18thccuisine.blogspot.com.au/">http://18thccuisine.blogspot.com.au/</a> <sup>xiii</sup>	Non-sabbatarian, but may have been influenced by Sabbatarians. Observed Passover and Unleavened Bread.
	Westerly or Hopkinton Congregation	Lesson 53, "Reaching the World with Power," <i>Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course</i> , pp. 7-8 <sup>xiv</sup>	Very likely observed the holy days.
<b>Eighteenth</b>	Transylvanian sabbatarians	As above	Observed all holy days
<b>Nineteenth</b>	Transylvanian sabbatarians	As above	Observed all holy days. They existed up until the nineteenth or twentieth century before many or most were absorbed into Judaism. <sup>xv</sup>
	An unattached group in Philadelphia	<i>History of the Church of God (7<sup>th</sup> Day)</i> , p. 66 <sup>xvi</sup>	Observed Passover, including footwashing, in 1845.

Century	Religious Organisation or person	Source	Comment
	Sabbatarians in West Virginia	<i>A True History of the True Religion</i> , pp. 201, 203; “Has God’s Church always kept the Passover?” <i>Reviews You Can Use</i> , March-April 1993, p. 32 <sup>xvii</sup>	Observed Passover in the 1850s
	Church of God	<i>The Journey</i> , pp. 182-3 <sup>xviii</sup> and “A Synoptic History of the Churches of God in the Latter Days,” <i>Facts of Our Faith</i> , p. 18 <sup>xix</sup>	Some advocated Passover observance in 1872, 1884, and 1885 in articles in church periodicals. As such, it is obvious that some observed the Passover in the late 1800s.
	Seventh Month Movement	Various sources	A movement within the SDAs in the late 1800s. The Seventh Month Movement was edging close to accepting holy day observance in the 1800s, but it never took off. It was recorded that even Ellen G White thought that the camp meetings of the Adventists should be held in a similar fashion to the Feast of Tabernacles. In addition, many other groups observed the Feasts. <sup>xx</sup>
	Greenberry G Rupert	Refer to information below	He probably began to keep all the holy days in the late 1880/90s.
	Strangites	“James Strang and the Sabbath-keeping Mormons,” <i>The Sabbath Sentinel</i> <sup>xxi</sup>	A Mormon offshoot, advocated the Sabbath and feast days since 1848-50.
<b>Twentieth</b>	Greenberry G Rupert’s Church of God (Remnant of Israel)	Refer to his articles in the <i>Bible Advocate</i> (May, June, July 1913) and his <i>Remnant of Israel</i> periodical. <sup>xxii</sup>	His church group was established around 1902/03.
	General Conference of the Church of God	<i>The Journey</i> , p. 183 <sup>xxiii</sup>	Coulter’s work shows how Passover observance on 14 <sup>th</sup> Abib gradually became established church doctrine and was incorporated into the <i>Statement of Beliefs</i> in 1917.
	True Jesus Church	<a href="https://tjc.org/">https://tjc.org/</a>	A Chinese Sabbatarian group practicing Sabbath and Passover observance since 1917. Apparently, they have roots in the Seventh Day Baptists.
	House of God	<a href="http://www.houseofgod.org/">http://www.houseofgod.org/</a>	Observation of the holy days since 1917.

Century	Religious Organisation or person	Source	Comment
	Church of God, Arran Island, Scotland	John Morgan interview with Margaret McKormack <sup>xxiv</sup>	Observed all holy days
	English Sabbatarians in early 1900s	“Deaconess baptised in 1918, Evicted by Sunday Worshipers,” <i>Worldwide News</i> <sup>xxv</sup>	Observed all holy days
	Church of God	<i>The Bible Advocate</i> (1907) <sup>xxvi</sup>	A letter was published advocating holy day observance, although that church does not advocate their observance.
	Andrew N Dugger	He privately observed the holy days from the 1950s <sup>xxvii</sup>	Observed all holy days
	Church of God in general		Clarence O Dodd and many other Church of God groups. <sup>xxviii</sup>
	Various others	Messianics, some Seventh-day Adventists, some Seventh Day Baptists and even some mainstream Baptists, etc. <sup>xxix</sup>	Observed all holy days

## Concluding Remarks

At the outset I mentioned that recently (April 2018) a member’s query was a call to action for writing on this subject; instead of an article or paper having been produced, a chart has been issued instead.

This is because at least 90-95% of all of my books and research are in storage, so what is contained herein may be regarded as an initial production on the topic. More detail will follow in future editions of this article.

In the meantime, I trust that this chart demonstrates the biblical holy days have been observed by Sabbatarians and others over many centuries.

And they shall continue to be kept on into the soon-coming Kingdom of God, ruled by the Messiah.

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## Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> **“In the days of unleavened bread Paul**, coming down from Galatia, arrived in Asia, considering the repose among the faithful in Smyrna to be a great refreshment in Christ Jesus after his severe toil, and intending afterwards to depart to Jerusalem. So in Smyrna he went to visit Strataeas, who had been his hearer in Pamphylia, being a son of Eunice the daughter of Lois. These are they of whom he makes mention when writing to Timothy, saying; *Of the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois and in thy mother Eunice*; whence we find that Strataeas was a brother of Timothy. Paul then, entering his house and gathering together the faithful there, speaks to them concerning the Passover and the Pentecost, reminding them of the New Covenant of the offering of bread and the cup; how that they ought most assuredly to celebrate it during the days of unleavened bread, but to hold fast the new mystery of the Passion and Resurrection. For here **the Apostle plainly teaches that we ought neither to keep it outside the season of unleavened bread**, as the heretics do, especially the Phrygians ... but **named the days of unleavened bread, the Passover, and the Pentecost, thus ratifying the Gospel** (Pionius. *Life of Polycarp*, Chapter 2. Translated by J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, vol. 3.2, pp. 488-506).

<sup>ii</sup> “A study of Polycarp from a Nazarene perspective will prove most interesting; it is believed from the account of his martyrdom (and through tradition) that he kept the weekly Sabbaths, and furthermore that he was martyred on “the great Sabbath.” **He was even called “a Nazarene” by Jewish Rabbi Isaac** in the 15<sup>th</sup> century CE. Some have speculated that, under his oversight, the Assembly at Smyrna was also observant of the Sabbath.” (Jesse ben Yosef in *Who was Polycarp of Smyrna?*, <http://torahdrivenlife.com/texts/csv/post-apostolic-fathers/polycarp-of-smyrna/> )

<sup>iii</sup> “After the Bar Cochba revolt of 132-135 A.D., the Nazarenes would not go back to Aelia and become part of a Gentile church. It was at this time that the Catholic Church began to call them heretics, primarily due to **their continued observance of the Sabbath, the Passover on the fourteenth of Nisan, and the annual Sabbaths**, as well as dietary laws. Epiphanius suggests that, until 135 A.D., Christians everywhere observed Passover irrespective of the day of the week. W.D. Davies states that the Jewish Christians still observed the Feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles — understanding that the New Covenant through Jesus did not negate these aspects of the Old — and that, the Jewish Christians were the dominant element in Christianity until 70 A.D.” (Dan Rogers pp. 1-2)

Anatolius of Alexandria wrote the following in the third century:

“I am aware that very many other matters were discussed by them, some of them with considerable probability, and others of them as matters of the clearest demonstration, by which they endeavour to prove that the **festival of the Passover and unleavened bread** ought by all means to be kept after the equinox...

“But nothing was difficult to them with whom it was lawful to celebrate the Passover on any day when the fourteenth of the moon happened after the equinox. Following their example up to the present time all the bishops of Asia—as themselves also receiving the rule from an unimpeachable authority, to wit, the evangelist John, who leant on the Lord’s breast, and drank in instructions spiritual without doubt—were in the way of celebrating the Paschal feast, without question, every year, whenever the fourteenth day of the moon had come, and the lamb was sacrificed by the Jews after the equinox was past; not acquiescing, so far as regards this matter, with the authority of some” (*The Paschal Canon of Anatolius of Alexandria*, chapters V, X; pp. 415, 419).

<sup>iv</sup> <https://earlychurch.org.uk/ebionites.php>

<sup>v</sup> *The Beliefs and Practices of the Church of God in Transylvania During the Middle Ages, 1588-1623* by Gerhard O Marx.

Note what *The Key of Truth* reveals:

"We know that the **Pauliani continued to keep the Passover on the fourteenth of Nisan** with the Jews. (p. clxii)

"Ananias (early seventh century), op. Arm. Petersburg, 1877, pp. 22 and 23, and in Byzant. Zeitschr. 1897: 'But **the Pauliani also keep the feast of the Pascha** on the same day (as the Jews), and whatever be the day of the full moon, they call it Kuriake, as the Jews call it Sabbath, even though it be not a Sabbath.' (p. clii)

"But on the day Pentecost, of the grace-bestowing, **hallowing Pentecost** [we celebrate] the inspiration flashing with light of the quickening Spirit, which in the form of fiery tongues descended on the Apostles, that they might by laying hands on the baptized bestow on them the gifts of grace they had received from the Spirit.

"In Bozod-Ujfalú there were (in 1890) a small group of Sabbatarians who had not gone over to the Jews or become part of the Jewish 'Israelitish Proselizing Congregation.' At this time the group consisted of five families, numbering seventeen men and women. They remained faithful to the doctrines as taught by Simon Pechis (the successor to Andreas Eossi). **They continued to keep the Sabbath and the other Jewish (Old Testament) laws.** Their prayers continued to be based on the prayer and ritual book of Simon Pechis, of which one copy was found in each home. They didn't intermarry with Christians. The Jews wanted nothing to do with them. The village judge, Josef Sallos and his older brother were among this Sabbatarian group." (p. 186)

<sup>vi</sup> J L Mosheim, C Coote & G Gleig in *An Ecclesiastical History, Ancient and Modern*. Vol 1, p. 333

"Among the sects of Oriental origin belongs, perhaps besides those already mentioned, the Pasagii or Pasagini."  
"The name of this sect reminds one of the word *passagium* (passage), which signifies a tour, and was very commonly employed to denote pilgrimages to the East. To the holy sepulcher—crusades. **May not this word, then, be regarded as an index, pointing to the origin of the sect as one that came from the East, intimating that it grew out of the intercourse with Palestine? May we not suppose that from very ancient times a party of Judaizing Christians had survived**, of which this sect must be regarded as an offshoot? The way in which they expressed themselves concerning Christ as being the first-born of creation, would point also, more directly, at the connection of their doctrine with some older Jewish theology, than at that later purely Western origin." (Neander in *Church History, fifth period*, 8, pp. 403,404 quoted in J N Andrew's *History of the Sabbath and the First Day of the Week*, vol 2, chapter 22-2)

Another work should be referred to, mentioning their festival observances:

"After what has been said of the Cathari, there still remains the sect of the pasagini. They teach Christ to be the first and pure creature; **that the Old Testament festivals are to be observed**—circumcision, distinction of foods, and in nearly all other matters, save the sacrifices, the Old Testament is to be observed as literally as the New—circumcision is to be kept according to the letter. They say that no good person before the advent of Christ descended into the lower regions; and that there is no one in the lower regions and in paradise until now, nor will there be until sentence has been rendered on the day of Judgement." (Gregorius, of Bergamo, about A.D. 1250 *Collectio Rev. Occitan* in the Royal Library of Paris, doc. 35, quoted in Dollinger's *History of the Sects*, vol. 2, p. 375, which in turn is quoted in J N Andrew's *History of the Sabbath and the First Day of the Week*, vol 2, chapter 22-2)

<sup>vii</sup> William Jones in *History of the Christian Church*:

"Investigators made a report to Louis XII, King of France that they had visited all the parishes that they (Waldenses) dwelt and had inspected their place of worship and found no images nor signs of the ornaments belonging to the mass not any of the ceremonies of the Roman church.... On the contrary, they kept the Sabbath day, observed the ordinance of baptism according to the primitive church, instructed their children in the articles of the Christian faith and the commandments of God." (p. 260)

"They observed the seventh day of the week according to the commandments, immersed for the believers baptism, and **kept the Passover** or the Lord's Day, once a year in the first month." (pp. 348-349)

<sup>viii</sup> Refer to Damsteegt's article "Decoding Ancient Waldensian Names: New Discoveries" for further information, especially pp. 252-58.

<sup>ix</sup> In addition to Marx's paper, refer to *College Notes. Church History. Lecture 22. Lollards/Anabaptists/Sabbatarians*: "Best Reference, the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, July 1890, #4, vol. II, by I Abrahams and C G Montefiore

a. Article reflects Jewish view of the part the Sabbath plays in differentiating religions:

"The celebration of the Sabbath is as much a common religious institution, as one of the most obvious marks of distinction between Judaism and Christianity. On the one hand, the whole Christian world observes each seventh day as a hallowed day of rest, thus to some extent pointing from week to week in the most solemn and in the most general and public manner, to the origin of Christianity: on the other hand, it is just by means of this Sabbath celebration— by ordaining that the Sabbath should be observed on a different day from that on which the people of Israel and the founders of Christianity themselves kept it—that Christianity has set itself in conscious and intentional opposition to the first possessors and inheritors of this great institution. Thus what was a mark of uniformity became a mark of diversity, and the separate observance of the seventh day developed into the most effective cause of separation between the Christian community and the adherence of the Jewish faith." p. 405

b. Shows Russian groups Sobotniki and Molokani:

"As regards the RUSSIAN Sabbath-observers, the so-called Sobotniki or Subbotniki, we have to depend for an account of their origin and present condition, on a few extremely scanty notices. They belong to the Russian sect, Molokani or Milk-drinkers, one of the various sects that arose, during the sixteenth century, in those provinces of Southern Russia which were at that time under the supremacy of the Polish crown, all of which sects displayed a Judaizing tendency, a marked leaning towards the Mosaic law. The Molokani, so runs the account given by a Russian chronicler, observed the Sabbath and had their children circumcised. The performance of Divine service, and the execution of other religious practices they entrusted to the oldest and most learned men selected from their own body.... Their worship consists of reading the Bible and singing the Psalms. For purposes of public service they assemble in a dwelling-room, which they call 'skool' (schkola). Persecuted in the government of Moscow, the Molkans settled in that of Woronesch, and subsequently spread throughout the neighboring government of Saratow. In the second half of the eighteenth century, their number in the first-named government had grown to 5,000 souls. By keeping their doctrines secret, they escaped persecution, till they were betrayed in 1769, and made to suffer oppression from the State." p. 466-467

c. Origin: Andreas Eossi:

"Andreas Eossi of Szent-Erzsebet was a rich Szekely of noble birth, who owned three villages and a great number of estates in the counties of Udvarhelyszek, Kukullo, and Fehervar, and who belonged to the earliest adherents of Unitarianism in Transylvania. Having been visited by severe trials, (he was ailing for many years, and had lost his wife and three sons), he sought consolation in religion. 'He read the Bible so long' -- runs the account of the chronicler already mentioned -- 'that he evolved there from the Sabbatarian form of religion.' What he recognized as truth, he endeavored to disseminate in the surrounding district; he composed treatises, prayers, and hymns, caused copies of these and other writings to be prepared and lent them out in all directions.... He was well versed in Church history, and was completely master of the Old and New Testament, from both of which he derived his teaching." p. 472-473

d. Much of their teaching is found in hymnbook:

"About 1600, there was compiled 'the old hymn-book of the Sabbatarians,' probably by Eossi himself. This book is the most important source whence acknowledged of the doctrines of the sect may be derived; it is the oldest monument of their literature, and contains paraphrases of the Psalms and other poetical passages of the Bible, metrical renderings of a few extracts from the Jewish prayer book.... Of the 110 poetical compositions, which are to be found in three manuscripts of this old Sabbatarian hymnbook, no less than 44 relate to the Sabbath, which, on account of the special regard in which its celebration was held, gave the sect the name they bear. **Five songs belong to the New Moon, 11 to the Festival of Passover, 6 to the Feast of Weeks, 6 to Tabernacles, 3 to the New Year and 1 to the Day of Atonement.**"

"They did not celebrate Purim and Chanukah. But even the Mosaic Laws they did not observe in their entirety, for they kept the dietary laws only up to a certain limit, and circumcision not at all. The Sabbath played the most important part in their religions life ... it brought the contrast between them and Christianity most prominently into view. They called the Sabbath celebration a 'spiritual marriage,' and adorned themselves for it in wedding

attire. The Sabbath service consisted of prayers and hymns, introduced and concluded by the sermon or 'instruction.' One of the Sabbatical hymns mentions among the requisites of a proper observance of the Sabbath, 'study of the holy law, feeding the poor, moderation in living, cheerfulness of disposition'; in another it is said: 'Let man first hallow himself, then the Sabbath of the Lord.' Although the feast of the first of Tishri is not designated the New Year festival in the Pentateuch, yet they celebrated it as the 'New Year' with special emphasis, as particularly characteristic, that they maintained that, in adhering to these observances, they were following the example and teaching of Jesus. 'He who keeps not the Sabbath will have no portion in the inheritance of Christ'; they celebrated 'the Passover of Israel, according to the command of our Christ.' They bound up with the Passover festival (in accordance with the views which they entertained regarding the millennium) the hope of the future redemption which Jesus will bring, in order to build up his millennial kingdom." pp. 473-474

e. Taught Christ's mission to enable us to keep commands:

"They regard Jesus as greater than Moses and the prophets; call him 'our Christ,' 'Lord Jesus,' 'King,' even 'the son of God'; the last, however, in the sense that all deserve to be called 'sons of God' who are free from sin. For the most part they reverence him as the Messiah, as the Deliverer proclaimed by the prophets. On the other hand, however, they accentuated his purely human nature, and laid stress on the belief that his mission had for its object not the destruction but the maintenance of the Law." p. 474

f. Thought of themselves as spiritual Jews:

"The Sabbatarians frequently declared that they joined themselves to Israel, and felt themselves Jews. In a Sabbath hymn occurs the following: 'We have chosen the observance of Thy law, we have found delight in the camp of Israel, despite his miserable lot.' And in another song: 'Not Abraham was our father, neither are we the remnant of his seed; but we are sprung from the house of Japheth, sons of ignorant heathens ... yet in Thee, our gracious Father, delight and exult our heart, our soul, and our mouth; though we were heathens, yet hast Thou turned unto us and hast made us sons of great Abraham.' " p. 475

g. They were strongly anti-Catholic:

"They declared the Christian festivals to be inventions of the popes, and even protested against the ringing of church bells. They regarded the Lord's Supper, not as a new institution of Jesus, but as an old Jewish custom. On the first night of Passover they ate unleavened bread, 'the bread of the Messiah,' calling to mind the Redeemer, who had appeared, and would one day come again." p. 475

A further work delves into this, Liechty's *Sabbatarianism in the Sixteenth Century*:

The Sabbatarians viewed themselves as converted Gentiles. **They held to the biblical holidays....** The Day of Atonement was a day of fasting, although they emphasized that penitence is more easily achieved by a peaceful and quiet meditation on the law and one's life than by fasting. The Day of Remembrance (New Year, which they celebrated in the Fall of the year) was the day on which they thanked God especially for the creation of the universe. There is no mention of circumcision, so it is unlikely that they practiced circumcision (pp. 61-62).

<sup>x</sup> Further references on these East European Sabbatarians are: *Back to the Origins: The Tragic History of the Szekler Sabbatarians* by Zoltán Tibori-Szabó (he mentions their feast day observance on page 7); and *Spiritual Jews of Szekler Jerusalem* by Judit Gellérd (reference is made to their feast day observance on page 3); and *Researcher visits descendants of Transylvanian Sabbatarians* by Bonne Rook (details for all of these can be found in the Bibliography).

<sup>xi</sup> <http://www.giveshare.org/churchhistory/transylvania.html>

Richard Nickels summarized their beliefs as such:

- 1) **The Passover, Days of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, Day of Atonement, Feast of Tabernacles, The Last Great Day. During the Passover season, no leavened bread was eaten. Obviously, Easter, New Year's, Christmas, and Sunday were rejected as days invented by Rome. They also adhered to the Sacred Calendar.**
- 2) The Ten Commandments.
- 3) The Health Laws (no eating of blood, pig, strangled animals, etc.).

- 4) The Millennium, to last 1000 years, at the beginning of which Christ will return and regather both Judah and Israel.
- 5) The use of God's Sacred Calendar. (Taught against Gregorian, Roman calendar.)
- 6) Two different Resurrections; one to eternal life at Christ's coming; the other to judgement at the end of 1000 years.
- 7) Saved by Grace, but laws still need to be kept.
- 8) It is God who calls people into His Truth. The world in general is blinded. The truth is not generally revealed to the mighty, but to the small, insignificant.
- 9) Christ was the greatest of the prophets, the most holy of all the people, the Crucified Lord, the Supreme Head and King of the real believers, the dearly beloved and Holy Son of God. (Note! After Eossi's death, some Sabbath-keepers began to look upon Christ as a holy man, but not as the divine God or even the divine Son of God in the strictest sense.)
- 10) Christ upon His return, will take over David's throne.
- 11) Pictures of Christ and God were considered idolatrous.
- 12) The New Covenant is only partly fulfilled now in those now called.
- 13) Disbelief in the Original Sin idea.
- 14) Disbelief in predestination as taught by Calvin. Instead, every person is a free moral agent.
- 15) Luther, Calvin, and the Pope were considered "abominations."

<sup>xii</sup> Falconer John. *A Breife Refutation of John Traskes Judaical and Novel Fanytyces*. St. Omer, 1618, p. 31 quoted by Bryan Ball in his *Seventh Day Men: Sabbatarians and Sabbatarianism in England and Wales, 1600-1800*, pp. 57-58.

<sup>xiii</sup> *Passover & Days of Unleavened Bread* by Caroline Smith-Kizer.

"Although the official position of the Roman Church in New France did not allow non-Catholics to remain within its territories, the British colonies did allow dissenters. Adherents of the French Protestant Church, commonly known as Huguenots, established colonies at New Rochelle and New Paltz in the Hudson Valley, New York; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Charleston, South Carolina.

"A weeklong Passover celebration, similar to the first century Church's Festival of Unleavened Bread, was kept by the Charleston congregation of the French Protestant Church in addition to Easter, as evidenced by its Liturgy, written down in 1713 and republished in 1737 and 1772. Several other Christian denominations have continued the Reformation journey by keeping Passover and the commemoration of the Ascension in the Wave Sheaf Offering, while dropping the observance of Easter.

"The practices of the French Reformed Church in France are not available here in the colonies for study, but in the paintings of Raspal from the region of Arles in Provence, the prominent display of the Huguenot cross by his models suggests that the French Reformed Church was still alive and dynamic in the 18thC within Provence. Some French officers' journals state that the habitants' costumes of New France reminded them of Provençals—this should have been doubly true of French Huguenots in the British colonies, suggesting that there should have been a similarity of religious practice. Now stretching the inference, it might be said that the French Reformed Church had a similar liturgy in Provence as in Charleston. Although the evidence of this is lacking, it can be clearly stated that the French Reformed Church in Charleston, SC, **kept the Passover as a week-long festival and kept an eight-day festival observance in the seventh month** [be sure and click the arrow for the next page to see the continuation], an observance similar to Succoth (or Feast of Tabernacles as kept by modern Christian fellowships that also keep the Passover).

"Because the French Reformed Church in 18thC South Carolina kept a Passover festival, recipes intended for Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread have a place in French Huguenot cuisine."

<sup>xiv</sup> *Ambassador Bible Correspondence Course*

The Westerly or Hopkinton congregation retained the original records—being recognized as the leading or HEADQUARTERS location. The reason for this transfer is most interesting. Previous to this time, the Westerly or Hopkinton site had become the regular meeting place for "a YEARLY MEETING" of members from all over! It was

at such a meeting—on September 28 (Gregorian calendar)—that the decision was made to establish the new congregation. Details are lacking, but it is highly significant that this date falls during the Feast of Tabernacles of that year!

The earliest of these annual meetings of which we now have record had been held in late May, 1684. Other annual meeting dates consistently fell either during the fall Holy Day season or near Pentecost (“The Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America,” pages 127, 150-152, 174, 602, 614). None of these meetings came at Christmas, Easter, or even in midsummer! This was not mere chance. God’s people were, at least in part, attempting to follow the pattern of the Holy Days He had ordained.” (Lesson 53, “Reaching the World with Power,” pp. 7-8)

<sup>xv</sup> Regarding the 16<sup>th</sup> century Transylvanian Sabbatarians, “By the end of the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century, they still were represented in at least eleven towns and villages in Transylvania, but by 1865 only about 170-180 members remained in the town of Bozod-Ujfalú (near Gyula Feheruar). The group was later absorbed into Judaism during the 1930s.

Refer also to <http://www.russianaz.org/molokane/subbotniki/>

There may still be some feast-observing Sabbatarians in the Transylvanian region to this day (Bonne Rook in “Researcher visits descendants of Transylvanian Sabbatarians”)

<sup>xvi</sup> According to John Kiesz’s article “The Continuity of the Gospel,” *Bible Advocate*, 12 August 1963:

“Most of the brethren observed the Lord’s Supper or Communion and feet-washing at various times, although a group in Philadelphia began practicing the keeping of the Christian Passover in about 1845, and a brother in Illinois advocated the commemoration of the Lord’s death at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> of Abib in about 1867. Before the turn of the century, all of our assemblies had come to the conclusion that Communion of the Lord’s Supper should be observed annually on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month of the Hebrew year.” (p. 25)

<sup>xvii</sup> From *A History of the True Religion* we read:

“Concerning the Passover, or the Lord’s Supper, in at least one assembly of the early Sabbatarians in West Virginia, the following is illustrative: ‘March 21, 1853, it was voted that communion service be held once in twelve months “on the fourteenth day of the first Jewish month”; i.e., on the evening of the Passover.’—Idem, p. 201.... The diet of some of the early Sabbatarians in West Virginia, can be understood from the following extract concerning the South Fork of Hughes River Church in 1842: ‘In their efforts to follow the mandates of the Mosaic law, the flesh of swine for food was placed under ban. Mutton and beef tallow took the place of lard in cooking. A few of the more well-to-do used olive oil.’—Idem, p. 203”

<sup>xviii</sup> In Robert Coulter’s book *The Journey* he wrote that from its founding:

“The Church had no uniform practice for holding its communion services. They were held whenever circumstances seemed appropriate to its clerics.” (p. 182)

Coulter then discusses several examples of the “whenever” practice. Then he writes:

“But in 1872, Samuel Davidson wrote to *The Hope* that he believed the Church should conduct its communion service annually at the time of the Jewish Passover ... Davidson’s polemic was met with such favor, Editor Jacob Brinkerhoff of the *Advent and Sabbath Advocate*, successor to *The Hope*, began publishing a spring date in the paper for the Church’s annual communion service. His arbitrary listings of the date for the Lord’s Supper met with the approval of the Church, and it began in unison to hold its annual Lord’s Supper on that date.” (p. 182)

“A member of the Church in Texas was visiting relatives in Washington, D.C., and went to the Congressional Library, where he discovered the perpetual calendar for Hebrew festivals. He identified the future dates for the Passover and shared that information with Editor Brinkerhoff. With that information, Brinkerhoff began to



publish the actual date of the Jewish Passover festival as an appropriate date for the Church's annual Lord's Supper service." (pp. 182-3)

Brinkerhoff wrote [in 1884], "The Israelitish passover was instituted upon the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month, and was annually observed at that time [of Jesus' crucifixion] by the Israelites. It was at that time of the year that Jesus observed the passover, and ... at the same time instituting the Lord's Supper and changing the emblems of the Passover." ...

The March 10, 1885, issue of the *Advocate* announced the date of the Lord's Supper service: "The 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month (Passover) occurs this year on the night after Sunday, March the 30<sup>th</sup>, according to Roman time."

An annual communion service began as an informal practice initiated by a discussion in the open forum of *The Hope* magazine in 1872. In early 1917, A. N. Dugger incorporated it in his revised doctrinal statement. He wrote, "The Lord's Supper as Christ instituted it, should be observed yearly, that the wine and bread are typical of His spilled blood and broken body." (p. 183)

In an article "What's in an Ordinance?," *Bible Advocate*, Sept-Oct 2018, Robert Coulter wrote:

"After the Church of Christ in Michigan (former name of the Church of God [Seventh Day]) was organized in 1858, and her congregations grew, she began holding quarterly weekend meetings that rotated among her churches. They began on Friday evening with an opening preaching service, followed by a full day of preaching on Sabbath, and concluded with observing the Lord's Supper and foot washing on Sunday afternoon before dismissal..."

"But beside the quarterly meetings' observance of a communion service, ministers of the churches of Christ in Michigan and the churches of Jesus Christ in Iowa held communion services whenever they felt the occasion called for it..."

"Eventually Brinkerhoff learned of the perpetual calendar for all the Hebrew festivals, and he published the actual date of the Passover as the date for observing the Church's annual communion service. He announced the date for the annual Lord's Supper service for 1885 in the *Advent and Sabbath Advocate* magazine: 'The 14th day of the first month (Passover), occurs this year on the night after Sunday, March the 30th, according to Roman time.'" (p. 8)

Richard Nickels in his *History of the Seventh Day Church of God* (chapter 5) noted:

"The issue of when to observe the 'Lord's Supper' has been another constant issue of dispute in the Church of God, Seventh Day. A passing mention of a January, 1865 observance of communion in the Hartford and Casco churches is the only communion record so far discovered of the early Michigan period."

<sup>xix</sup> "It is also of great interest to observe from the records of the Marion Church of God, that in 1870 they adopted foot-washing and communion to be held each quarter; and the first report of an annual observance was in 1899.... There is evidence that the Lord's Supper was observed annually long before 1899. **All of this is an indication of how truth gradually came to front in the Church of God**, in spite of the confusion caused by Satan." (p. 19)

<sup>xx</sup> "26 religious organizations, most with no WCG links, teach WCG-like doctrines" *The Journal*, Issue 26.

<sup>xxi</sup> "James Strang and the Sabbath-keeping Mormons," *The Sabbath Sentinel*, Sept-Oct, 1999.

<sup>xxii</sup> Rupert advocated the holy days and wrote about their meanings in the following editions of *The Remnant of Israel*: June 1915, July 1918, April 1919, June 1919, Sept 1919, Sept 1921. His successors similarly advocated holy day observance in the same publication in the July 1925, March 1928 and Sept 1929 issues.

<sup>xxiii</sup> The doctrines of the Salem church in its 1933 schism with Stanberry included this one first published by Editor A N Dugger in 1917:

“Statement 19: The Lord's Supper is to be observed annually, on the beginning of the Passover, the fourteenth day of Nisan according to the Hebrew calendar.” (p. 281)

Robert Coulter noted in the article “What’s in an Ordinance?,” *Bible Advocate*, Sept-Oct 2018:

“The annual observance of the Lord’s Supper on the date of the Passover became an official doctrine of the Church of God when Andrew N Dugger, president of the General Conference, included a doctrinal statement in his revision of its doctrines in 1917. But by the 1920s, Dugger was teaching that the Lord’s Supper must be observed precisely in the evening following the thirteenth and at the beginning of the fourteenth day of Nisan, according to the Hebrew calendar.” (p. 9)

<sup>xxiv</sup> Scottish Sabbatarians in the early 1900s which kept the holy days. Source: *Church of God in Scotland* by John Morgan, Melbourne, Australia and “Margaret (Meg) McCormack, 1916-2012” by Brian Convery et al.

<sup>xxv</sup> “Deaconess baptised in 1918, Evicted by Sunday Worshipers”, *Worldwide News*, 4 March 1985, by Jeff Zhorne.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Letter in the *Bible Advocate* from Sister Katie R Gillstrap advocating the observation of the Days of Unleavened Bread (p.251). There was also an article in a 1916 *Bible Advocate* by GW Sarber advocating these days:

“Sarber Supports Annual Feast Days:

In 1916, G W Sarber from Knox, Indiana wrote in the Advocate supporting the annual holydays. He mentioned that Pentecost is 50 days from Nisan 16, the Feast of Tabernacles is the 15th day of the seventh month, and the eighth day of Tabernacles is also a sabbath rest. “These are the feasts of the Lord, and from the Bible standpoint they are as binding upon the sons of God at this present time as they were when God commanded them to Israel of old.” The editor, A N Dugger, included a caption stating that, “Every writer is held responsible for their sentiments.”<sup>166</sup> (Richard Nickels in *History of the Seventh Day Church of God*, p. 138)

<sup>xxvii</sup> According to the Kapsinendet Church of God 7th day New Jerusalem:

[https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=571571866307438&id=318737091590918](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=571571866307438&id=318737091590918)

Feasts in the Church History: The Church of God 7th Day in her history was not a feast keeping organization. Even before the division between Church of God 7th Day and Seventh Day Adventist, the feast issue was controversial and elder James White (Husband to Ellen G White) wrote an article in *The Present Truth* of 1849 rejecting the observance of feast days. The issue of feasts in available histories so far, was first introduced in the Church of God 7th Day by an independent minister by the name G G Rupert. It’s said that Mr. Rupert used to keep the feasts and at times used to write articles in the church paper of the time (*Bible Advocate*, of May, June and July 1913) advocating for the feasts observance.

In 1916, G W Sarber from Knox, Indiana, wrote in the Bible Advocate supporting the annual holydays.

“The Church of God 7th Day, in early years of 1860-1930’s never advocated for the observance of the feasts, though they celebrated the Lord’s Supper without the feasts of unleavened bread on eve of 14th of Nisan. In 1917, A.N. Dugger (the famous leader of the church in the 20th century) wrote an article ‘What the Church of God Believes and Why?’; in Article 21 he stated that the commandments nailed to the cross included only animal sacrifices, and yearly Sabbath days that were governed by the day of the month, new moons, feasts and other holydays, referring to Ephesians 2:15, Hebrews 9:10-12.”

According to Church of God historian, Richard Nickels, “The holydays were to be latent issue within the Church of God, accepted by some, but rejected by many. Though the official church position was against them, some

supporters of the Church of God continued to believe and keep them, yet still maintaining Church of God membership.”

It was later that elder Herbert W Armstrong started preaching and advocating for the observance of feasts in our latter day histories. Elder Armstrong came out strongly, preaching and publishing articles supporting the observance of the feasts in today's church. He explained the meaning of each feast in relation to today's church and new covenant. The Church of God was not ready to accept his teachings and doctrines of which feasts was just one of the many, this led him to break from the Church of God and started his own congregation which was latter known as Worldwide Church of God. This in fact explains why all churches that broke from Worldwide Church of God keep the feasts.

It happened that in 1950's elder A.N. Dugger migrated from America to settle permanently in Jerusalem, Israel. **While in Israel, it's evident that elder A.N.Dugger started keeping and observing this feast days.** Though he kept them, he never came out strongly to preach their observance by other people, this is apparent from the way he used to answer questions from his followers who wanted to know if they too should keep the feasts. One of his answers was, "... feasts and holydays of Israel are not like the gentile ones, as the Israelites celebrates and commemorates the mighty redemption from the Almighty. The question here should not be if we must keep them, but the question should be, will the Heavenly Father be happy with me if I join His children in celebrating His mighty works?" From such answers, elder Dugger left many of his followers in a great tussle of whether to or not to observe the feasts and to date many of his followers still argue over the holydays.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Unfortunately, some rather strange groups observe the feast days, such as World Mission Society Church of God. You can read their beliefs at <https://watvwelcome.org/en/truth/>.

<sup>xxix</sup> "In 1900, the Feast of Tabernacles was formally celebrated by the Southern Baptists at Falls Creek Encampment. There are pictures of the original Falls Creek Tabernacle with the blowing of the shofar to call to service. It was also celebrated heavily among those in the south, known as Bush Arbors, as late as the 1960s. From this movement came the history of tent revivals, which birthed the worldwide evangelist Billy Graham." (*Wikipedia*, "Christian observances of Jewish holidays")

Refer also to [https://www10.dict.cc/wp\\_examples.php?lp\\_id=1&lang=en&s=Feast%20of%20Tabernacles](https://www10.dict.cc/wp_examples.php?lp_id=1&lang=en&s=Feast%20of%20Tabernacles)

Churches of God, Christian Messianics, Jewish Messianics, and semi-Messianics such as Chuck Missler and the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, either observe or understand, to some degree, the typology of the holy days.

**[emphasis mine for all references above]**