

November 18, 2002 ©Homer Kizer

New Moons & Church Governance

Three-thirty in the morning, outside temperature near zero (-20 C), I stoke the fire to keep the inside temperature above freezing, noticing while I'm up that the moon is full. I could again be in Alaska, not Illinois. But if I were in Alaska, the moon would still be a day from being full.

For the many years I lived near Kenai, then Kodiak, and finally Fairbanks, observing the moon was unavoidable. Winter moonlight on snow made nights nearly as bright as the days. I split wood by moonlight, ran traps by moonlight, even sailed by moonlight. But I never marked time by observing new moons, the practice of aboriginal peoples across the North American continent—and the practice of physical Israelites who lived by the seasons, starting their calendar on the new moon after the Sign (i.e., the Spring Equinox). Even as a spiritual Israelite who knew to keep the weekly and annual sabbaths, I didn't observe new moons. Their observance was ridiculed by the Pasadena administration of what was then the most visible remnant of spiritual Israel that had left spiritual Babylon. But I was leaving unkept a third of God's holy day calendar, the third that might have prevented the spiritual slaughter of so many, of even my own daughters. An unsupportable claim? I don't think so. To Gentile converts at Colossae, who had begun to live like Jews—both Peter and Paul taught Gentile converts to judaize, or to live like Judeans (Gal 2:2, 14—and who were receiving flak from their former companions), the Apostle Paul wrote that they should not let anyone condemn them "in matters of food and drink or of observing festivals, new moons, or sabbaths" (2:16). Concerning food, we can imagine how these Gentile converts who were now eating only clean meats were being verbally abused by their families and former friends. Same for drink if these converts were no longer getting drunk for the sake of getting drunk. So there remains the matter of festivals, new moons, and sabbaths, with "sabbaths" possibly being a restricted term to only mean the weekly Sabbath and with "festivals" to include the annual high days and their attached festivals. The Church of God has observed the high sabbaths and the festivals of God for the past seventy-five years; unclean meats haven't been eaten for one hundred fifty years; the weekly Sabbath has been observed for three hundred plus years. And what we see is the progressive purification of doctrines and practices by the remnant of spiritual Israel that began to trickle out of spiritual Babylon in the 16th-Century. Therefore, it should surprise no one that this remnant of spiritual Israel has now begun to observe new moons, thereby completing those things which Epaphras taught Gentile converts to do (Col 1:7) when he brought to them the gospel of Christ, as taught to him by earlier disciples.

Let me repeat myself: Epaphras brought the gospel of Christ to Gentiles at Colossae, who had never been under the law of Moses, and who would have known little about the Sinai covenant. He taught them (just as the Apostle Peter taught Gentile converts at Antioch) to live as spiritual Judeans. They didn't need to be physically circumcised, for circumcision under the second or new covenant was of the heart and mind (Deu 30:6; Jer 31:33; Heb 8:10 & 10:16). But Paul's law of faith, or his righteousness that comes from faith (Rom

10:6-8) has Gentile converts believing God unto obedience by observing all that is written in the Book of Deuteronomy (Deu 30:10). Thus, these Gentile converts would have kept the commandments of God, including the weekly Sabbath; they would have kept the annual sabbaths or high days; and they would have kept the dietary laws. Literally, they would have lived as Judeans, which would cause them to suddenly seem very strange to families and former friends. And one of the things both Paul and Epaphras taught Gentile converts to do was observe new moons. Unfortunately, neither left a written record telling future disciples how or why new moons should be observed. So, as with keeping the high sabbaths, understanding of why new moons were observed by 1st-Century Christians comes with obedience to the Word of God.

One more time: when spiritual Israel was taken captive by spiritual Babylon, that captivity easily seen through the shadow of its reality (i.e., Nebuchadnezzar's sacking of Jerusalem, and his carrying away physical Jews to Babylon), the doctrines Peter and Paul taught to 1st-Century converts were lost. While in Babylon, spiritual Jews were required to worship demons through doctrines of demons—those doctrines include humanity has an immortal soul, heaven is the reward of the saved, God is a trinity, each mixed with lawlessness. In captivity, spiritual Israel returned to idol worship, substituting statuary of the Cross of Calvary for Nebuchadnezzar's golden image, and adding Mary with Child and the Hanging Jesus to the Cross to complete its trinity of pagan deities. All of what the world perceives as the basic tenets of Christianity come from spiritual Babylon, not from God the Father and His Messiah, especially so since greater Christianity denies that Jesus the Christ actually died and was dead for three days and three nights. The task before the living Christ today is to overturn every major doctrine of still-captured spiritual Israel, rescuing as many saints as are genuine from the synagogue of Satan prior to when the Father intervenes in the affairs of humanity (Rev 11:15 & Dan 7:9-14), bringing His wrath to fruition.

Christ began the process of calling a remnant of spiritual Israel out of spiritual Babylon with the Reformation. In Western Europe, a few anti-Trinitarians became Sabbath-keeping Baptists, with the first of them arriving in North America mid 17th Century. Spiritual Babylon's amillennialism was rooted out of the beliefs of the remnant of genuine saints through William Miller's Advent teachings, which were wrong because Miller and others (notably Ellen G. White) were unable to comprehend that the history of physical Israel was merely the shadow of the history of spiritual Israel, and prophecies about physical Israel were mostly fulfilled on a physical level, leaving their remaining fulfillment pertaining to spiritual Israel. This is the same problem Herbert Armstrong had half a century later. But just as Christ used the Advent movement to reinsert knowledge of His soon approaching return into the remnant of spiritual Israel He had called out of spiritual Babylon, He used Herbert Armstrong to reinsert knowledge of the holy days and God's plan for humanity into that remnant of spiritual Israel. Christ is now using the literature of this Church (The Philadelphia Church — Stonefort) to reinsert knowledge of physical Israel being the shadow of spiritual Israel into first that remnant which has left Babylon, then into all of spiritual Israel as a third of this great nation of spiritual Israel becomes the harvesters of humanity during the Tribulation. A remnant of the Bride of Christ has steadily purified Herself for five centuries, with that purification leaping forward now that humanity has entered the time of the end. Thus, we should expect that the called-out remnant of spiritual Israel who has returned to spiritual Jerusalem to begin observing new moons—and we have. The Apostle Paul taught 1st-Century Gentile converts to observe new moons, so the reasonable expectation is that we, too, at the end of the age,

should be observing them. We cannot expect spiritual Israelites still held captive by the king of Babylon, Satan himself, to flee to spiritual Jerusalem until the walls are up and the gates are hung, figurative expressions for having rebuilt the doctrines of Jesus Christ as taught by Jesus and His first Disciples. Then the synagogue of Satan will acknowledge that Christ has loved this remnant all along as many disciples come into covenant with Christ for the first time, even though judgment has been upon them. Many will be saved who otherwise would have gone into the lake of fire because of their lawlessness. They are the harvesters for which Jesus said to pray. When God the Father and Christ liberate all of humanity from Satan's slavery halfway through seven years of Tribulation, these harvesters will reap the fields, bringing many sons and daughters into the first resurrection, thereby covering their many sins for having wrongly taught spiritual Israelites to prostitute themselves on the streets of Babylon.

All of the above can be seen through its shadow: the divinely recorded history of physical Israel is the shadow of the mostly unseen history of spiritual Israel. How can a Christian discern that the vicar of Christ is an imposter? First, the disciple realizes that the vicar teaches doctrines contrary to inspired Scripture, even acknowledging that one of the proofs of his power is that almost all of Christianity worships on Sunday rather than on the Sabbath, as commanded by Scripture. So from the Word of God a drawn disciple can state with certainty that the pope isn't reigning in Christ's stead.

Second, the disciple can look to the shadow and see when physical Israel rejected YHWH's rule over them, and demanded a human king like other peoples had. Then the disciple can look at the same point in spiritual Israel's history and see where spiritual Israel rejected God's rule over the nation, and wanted the spiritual power behind the Roman emperor as its spiritual king. What was physical, or human, becomes spiritual, or angelic. Spiritual Israel wasn't actually ruled by Constantine, but by the demonic power[s] behind the Roman throne. This spiritual power can be identified prophetically by understanding Daniel's visions, and this same spiritual power still hasn't released the majority of spiritual Israel that was in the house of Judah. And I just complicated my presentation. Spiritual Israel split as did physical Israel. The division wasn't geographic; i.e., North versus South, or Samaria versus Judea. Rather, the division was theological: the error of Bishop Arius versus the error of trinitarianism. The spiritual house of Judah held the Trinitarian error. The spiritual house of Israel, holding the error of Bishop Arius, sacked spiritual Judah three times (i.e., Arian Christians sacked Roman Christians three times, with the city just happening to be in the way). Today, the endtime descendants of the northern house of Israel people the United States and Britain—and the error of Bishop Arius has reemerged in the teaching of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (the Mormons), which is the fastest growing religion in the world, and which will conquer religiously just as the United States has physically. Let me run this by everyone again: the Mormons are the spiritual heirs of the Vandals, and will achieve the same type of success within spiritual Israel as the United States has achieved within the community of nations that can be identified as physical Israel. The watchmen who are constantly looking at Rome and the Roman Church need to turn around and look at where the demonic King of Greece reigns. Those spiritual Babylonian kings behind the Roman throne will be trampled by the demonic king of Greece in exactly the same manner Alexander the Great overran the Persians. Likewise, shortly after spiritual Babylon falls, the first demonic king of Greece will be broken. The kings of the North and of the South will then emerge, and humanity is in the Tribulation. The physical and the spiritual creation are joined when the demonically

possessed man of perdition declares himself God 1290 days before Christ returns as the all powerful Messiah, and 30 days before Christ takes him out by splitting the Mount of Olives; for if those days were not shortened, no flesh would be saved alive, such is the ruthlessness of this possessed man of perdition. But he is dealt a deadly blow by Christ who fights as on a day of battle (note the indefinite article), not "the" day of battle. For that last 1260 days, all of humanity will be liberated from Satan's slavery, as Satan, now cast out of heaven, comes as the true antiChrist, comes as a roaring lion. Open salvation occurs. If a person wants to remain a slave to Satan, the person will have to accept his slave mark, which is the mark of the beast, or the tattoo of the Cross (Chi xi stigma). And for more detail about all of this, request, Revelation, Unsealed & Revealed.

There, was the above declared with sufficient boldness? Within the Fellowship of Faith, a few disciples cringe when I do the job for which I was drafted—I didn't set out to be either religious, or to be a writer/literary critic. I certainly never thought I would explicate the biblical text. I was satisfied building rifles in a little shop along the Oregon Coast, where the weather was extremely desirable, and the deer, elk, and steelhead were plentiful. I liked living there. I liked what I was doing. And I wouldn't go back for anything. My ancestors were Dissenters. Possibly because of their righteousness, or as an answer to their prayers, I was drafted to do a work— God the Father, perhaps from the foundations of the earth, decided that I could do a job He needed filled although I'm not as comfortable saying that I was known to Him from the foundations as Paul was. The implications of predestination are that free will has been restricted; and under the new covenant, there has been a limitation placed upon free will. A person is drawn from the world and is given a small measure of the holy spirit, which is the circumcision of the person's heart and mind, or the writing of the laws of God on the person's heart and mind. The person isn't consulted about whether the person really wants to leave the world—the person would never leave the world, since the natural mind is hostile to God, if the person wasn't first spiritually modified by the Father. So, to even be able to choose to reject sin, the person must have his or her mind involuntarily altered, such is the power of Satan's broadcast of rebellion. Predestination, then, becomes when will a person's mind be tampered with by God. A person can then reject God, maybe. My experience was that early rejection wasn't possible: I was drafted into the Body of Christ, just as if I had been drafted into the Army. I couldn't have quit until after judgment was upon me, and even then I'm not sure I could've quit. I suspect all I could've done was get out of covenant with God the Father and His Christ, and thereby book reservations for the lake of fire. Therefore, what I do now is the job for which I was drafted. I can either do it with enthusiasm or with reluctance, but either way I am under obligation to do this job, that obligation being a real force within me. Those disciples who cringe at what I will write as morning nears will just have to cringe. They are free to reject my words, which come because of the job. They are free to point fingers, to utter accusations, to pass out tapes about false prophets, but the rebuilding of the walls of spiritual Jerusalem will continue. The work cannot be stopped. Christ returns to spiritual Jerusalem, not to spiritual Babylon, so the restoration of the city proceeds on Christ's schedule. I would actually like the work to go faster than it is. The fields appear ripe for harvesting today—and why should Satan be allowed to inspire his lie about immortal souls escaping to heaven to be sung one more time? Today is a good day to put an end to his lies.

*

The double issue (November and December 2002) of The Journal arrived yesterday. In it was the Living Church of God's amended belief statement, which addresses church

organization and government. While reading it—and waiting to put additional wood in the stove—I realized what I should have years past: the centralized government instilled in the Worldwide Church of God by Herbert Armstrong is not biblical, and has never been biblical, but remains as a holdover from the spiritual captivity of Israel by the king of Babylon, Satan. The early church was composed of mostly autonomous fellowships, with the Apostles governing as the judges governed ancient Israel. The endtime church will also be composed of mostly autonomous fellowships—and we, in the Body of Christ, would have long ago recognized this organizational pattern if we would have been observing new moons.

Although it is cold where I write, I am not suffering from frost-bite of the brain, but rather, from being drafted to write the literature for an endtime work that will attempt to recover as many misled sheep as Christ allows. In the 17th-Century, the Sabbath was recovered from where it had been stored in the king's treasure house in spiritual Babylon for fourteen centuries. Then in the 20th-Century, the Holy Days were found in that same storehouse, and brought forth to be kept by Herbert and Loma Armstrong for seven years before the reason for keeping them began to be taught by Mr. Armstrong. Now, seventy-five years later, a few of the endtime fellowships are beginning to observe new moons, with the reason for such observances developing with obedience. Just as the Holy Days were kept prior to the spiritual awareness coming that these annual high sabbaths represented the plan of God, new moons had to be observed before spiritual awareness came that they shadow governance of the greater Body of Christ.

Before seeing that governance, Scriptural authority for keeping new moons should be established. Equally important is determining what constitutes the new moon, the dark of the moon or the first sliver.

The Sinai covenant has ended, so those things that were added to the Sinai covenant because of physical Israel's lack of faith have also ended. Spiritually, new covenant disciples are under the second covenant, with its mediator changed from Moses to the glorified Christ. New covenant disciples in the 1st Century acquired, over a sixty-year period, what we, today, know as the New Testament. The three thousand drawn on that day of Pentecost had not read a word of any canonical epistle of Paul's, not a word of any of the synoptic Gospels, not a word of John's writings. Yet, from the Holy Scriptures preached by Peter, they were convicted of their need to accept Christ as their personal savior. In fact, all of the Apostles, including Paul, preached Christ from what we identify as the Old Testament. As a result, what was widely understood and accepted is seldom mentioned in the epistles of the Apostles. There was no reason to mention what hadn't been changed, since drawn disciples could read the second covenant for themselves, and know what God the Father and His Christ expected of them. Therefore, little is written in the New Testament about observing the weekly Sabbath. Little needed to have been written, for everyone was doing it. Physical circumcision was another matter. Because most Jews by birth didn't understand that the Sinai covenant, which had made of them a holy nation (Exod 19:5-6), had been abolished (Eph 2:15), they didn't understand that physical Israelites no longer had a special relationship with YHWH who came as the man Jesus and whom they had rejected. They didn't have Paul's epistle to the Ephesians as part of Holy Scripture. Rather, what they had was Genesis 17, which has the Messiah coming as the promise to Abraham, the ratification of that promise being circumcision. Those who believed in Christ, as far as these converted Jews were concerned, had to be circumcised, since Christ was the fulfillment of the promise ratified by circumcision, which itself was an everlasting ordinance. They never understood the difference between physical and spiritual Israel, between the physical covenant and the

spiritual covenant—and they are not alone. The vast majority of all of greater spiritual Israel doesn't understand the difference between the physical covenant and the spiritual covenant, between the physical fulfillment of prophecies and the spiritual fulfillment of prophecies. Herbert Armstrong never understood the difference. Billy Graham doesn't understand the difference. Both individuals err or erred on opposite sides of the same cornerstone; i.e., Christ. Their sons continue to follow in their father's errors. And that has been the history of Christianity, with God the Father and His Christ repeatedly having to select a different lineage of Believers to continue purifying His Bride, only returning to a family when enough generations have passed that the sons no longer deify their physical fathers.

Following in the faith once delivered isn't good enough when that faith was delivered in spiritual Babylon, by its king. Likewise, following in the faith once delivered even by a righteous earthly father isn't good enough when the Bible is the Living Word of God, that Word changing as endtime prophecies are unsealed and revealed. The Bible is NOT a static book. Its message is dynamic, raising the barre in meaning as the disciple grows in grace and knowledge. It is not like a novel I have written, which will change meaning with the varying sophistication of the reader, but which is limited in how far it can change. The Bible will continue to change until a disciple is perfect. The Bride of Christ will make Herself ready, even if greater spiritual Israel remains worshipping in the synagogue of Satan.

Therefore, because Jewish converts didn't well understand that the Sinai covenant had been abolished, the issue of circumcision gets considerable press in the Apostles' epistles. But keeping the Sabbath wasn't an issue—everyone was keeping the Sabbath—so those same epistles are mostly silent about the Sabbath, which is well covered in The Law and The Prophets. Likewise, these same epistles are mostly silent about observing new moons, the restoration of observance reasonably well covered by what Ezra wrote and did, and by what Hezekiah did. In the physical, Ezra's restoration of new moon observance shadows the restoration that should have occurred when the Holy Days were found in the King of Babylon's storehouse by Herbert Armstrong. In fact, in his early years in the Body of Christ Mr. Armstrong held Bible studies on the new moons. He was close to restoring their observance, close to fulfilling his work under the spiritual Ezra. But with the restoration of new moon observance comes understanding of how the Body of Christ should be governed. He rejected that Scriptural form of governance, choosing instead to install an autocratic form of spiritual dictatorship into the Body of Christ. As such, it wasn't long afterwards that he actually ridiculed observance of new moons. And Herbert Armstrong's work has been rejected by God: his form of church governance allowed Satan to kill the entire organization Mr. Armstrong built with a couple of bullets, as well as killing 100,000 disciples with the same two shots.

Reinstitution of new moon observances has been left to those who are doing the work of spiritual Nehemiah. So for those disciples who were drawn by God the Father under the Armstrong administration, what I will write will seem like I'm changing times and seasons. I will seem like a false prophet. But what I am is a reader of texts, a reader with the Breath of God, a reader who doesn't fear to state the obvious. The sacred calendar needs spiritual adjustment, and needs freed from the abolished Sinai covenant. Herbert Armstrong's form of church governance needs flushed. Likewise, everything he wrote about tethering spiritual Israel to physical Jerusalem needs rejected.

Spiritual Israel lives in spiritual Jerusalem, a city without geographical boundaries, or a geographical location, but a city walled by the doctrines of Christ inside of living stones. God has placed His name wherever two or three disciples are gathered in His name.

Physical Israel looks to physical Jerusalem. Spiritual Israel does not. Rather, spiritual Israel looks to Christ, and to His Millennium reign. Physical Israel also looks for its Messiah and His reign, little realizing that they killed their God (i.e., YHWH) and rejected their Savior. Nevertheless, Christ will again save a remnant (144,000) on Mt. Zion, because their God is far more faithful, and loves them far more than they can imagine.

God the Logos, who became the man Jesus Christ, directed the prophet Isaiah to write, concerning His coming as the Messiah, "For I know their [Israelites who sanctify and purify themselves] works and their thoughts, and I am coming to gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and shall see my glory For as the new heavens and the new earth, / which I will make, / shall remain before me, says the Lord; / so shall your descendants and your name remain. / From new moon to new moon, / and from sabbath to sabbath, / all flesh shall come to worship before me, / says the Lord" (66:18, 22-23). Thus, using the reasoning employed for keeping the High Days—if God required them to be kept in the past, and will require them to be kept in the future, then spiritual Israel ought to be keeping them today—we are under obligation to observe new moons, a practice not widely followed within spiritual Israel, or even by the remnant Christ has recovered from spiritual Babylon.

While some question exists about how much work should be performed on the day of the new moon, with Amos 8:5 suggesting similarity to the weekly Sabbath and with the offerings for that day the same as for high sabbaths, the fact that an observance should be kept is beyond dispute. The relationship of new moon observances to weekly and annual sabbaths observances remains an area for additional study, but when the new moon occurs is not. Historically, the new moon is the first sliver seen in the sky. The day begins at sundown. That first sliver will appear just after sundown. That day is now "day one" of the particular month. The month cannot start until the first sliver appears. If a calculated dark of the moon were to begin the month, then the full moon will not appear on the fifteenth of the month, as commanded in both the first and the seventh month.

The math, though simple, is interesting. The lunar year is 354 days, plus a little bit. With twelve months to the year, the average length of a month is twenty-nine and a half days, with the average time between the calculated new moon (during the dark of the moon) and the full moon being fourteen and three-quarter days. If the moon is dark for two days, then the calculated new moon would occur one day before the sliver is seen in the eastern sky. Numbering when the sliver is seen as day one, then the calculated new moon would have occurred at the beginning of day zero. So one full day would have passed when day one begins. Likewise, two full days would have passed when day two begins. Fourteen full days would have passed when day fourteen begins. The moon would then become full at the sixth hour of the day portion of day fourteen. Its fullness would not be observable for another six hours. It would appear full when day fifteen begins, whereas it wasn't yet full when the night portion of day fourteen ended.

If the dark of the moon were only one day in length, then the calculated new moon would appear at day break of day zero. The moon would then be full during the night of day fifteen. While if the dark of the moon is three days in length and numbering were to begin on the calculated new moon, then the sliver would appear on day three of the month, and the month would have actually started during the previous month. Plus, the full moon would appear during the night of day fourteen, placing the calendar off at least one full day. Apparently one reason why a sacred day begins in the evening and not at some other hour is so that months can be accurately established using the lunar calendar. If any other time

is used to begin a month/year than at the first sliver, just after sunset in the sky, then the calendar gets messed up in a hurry. And if the day were to start at any other time than at evening, then the first sliver would not appear at the beginning of the first day of the month. So, what do new months have to do with church governance? Spiritual Israel doesn't live in any one particular country, or in any one particular area of the world. Spiritual Israel doesn't have borders of the Nile to the Euphrates. The world is literally its domain. Thus, while physical Jerusalem was the capital of physical Israel until the split, and was again the capital after the house of Israel was taken captive, spiritual Jerusalem exists as the focus or capital of spiritual Israel, but spiritual Jerusalem is bound by doctrinal walls. It isn't a geographical city, restricted to a certain latitude and longitude. It is a spiritual city that exists wherever the doctrines of Christ are held and kept by faith. As such, it exists equally in South Africa as it does in Southern Illinois—and since the new moon that begins Abib is to be observed at Jerusalem, now spiritual Jerusalem for spiritual Israel, each fellowship of the Church in Philadelphia will begin its sacred year from its present location.

Allow me to repeat myself: you, as a spiritual Israelite, need to keep your own calendar so that you don't celebrate a harvest feast in the spring of the year. This eliminates any centralized authority over you and your fellowship of faith, except for the authority of Christ, and the authority that Christ has established in your fellowship. As a spiritual Israelite, Christ is our high priest, but Christ doesn't dwell in modern Judea and the city of Jerusalem. Christ isn't in jeopardy of being blown up by a suicide bomber; I jest, but hopefully to make a point. Christ dwells in you, through grace. In actuality, Christ dwells in heaven where He intercedes on our behalf. Truly, He isn't in Jerusalem, what Ezekiel's vision recorded in his chapters 10-11 show. He returned to Jerusalem as the man Jesus Christ, but His chosen people killed Him. They ended the covenant which made them His chosen people, a holy people, a royal priesthood. They were replaced by spiritual Israel. Physical Jerusalem has been replaced by spiritual Jerusalem. And spiritual Israelites begin their new year where they live, which is what the variances of when the new moon appears show.

I can hear Mr. Armstrong's followers hollering that God is not the author of confusion. Oh? How do you read Genesis 11:5-8? Elohim [plural — both Theon and Theos were present] said, Let us confuse their language. Is Elohim not the author of the linguistic confusion that has ever since occurred? Of course They are. So exactly why do you claim God cannot handle a little confusion? Does the Father not hear prayers said in every language? Does He not today hear thousands of voices singing praise to Him off-key, at odd hours, in hundreds of languages, all at one time? Sure He does. So are we spiritual Israelites going to confuse God by keeping high day feasts and new moons in their seasons and at their times? You must be joking, if you think so. God is probably confused by why we would think we honor Him by keeping a harvest feast at planting time. And we wouldn't have even started doing anything so silly if not for the top-down, autocratic governance established by Mr. Armstrong that required spiritual Israel to keep physical Jerusalem's times and seasons. That willy-nilly mixing, however, of the spiritual with the physical was characteristic of his biblical exegesis—and remains characteristic of the splinter organizations descended from how he read the Bible.

Let's back up and try to show this through a different type of analogy: we can see the autonomous governance of every fellowship setting their own calendars in a what-if example that isn't as far fetched as it might seem. If a disciple of the Apostle Paul sailed west from Rome in the mid 1st-Century, sailed through the pillars of Hercules, and carefully

followed the sailing instructions of Plutarch's translation of an old Carthaginian manuscript and arrived on the east coast of North America, where Greeks had married aboriginal inhabitants (a copy of Plutarch's translation is found in Dr. Barry Fell's *Saga America*—and if this disciple of Apostle Paul had faithfully observed the weekly Sabbath, never losing count of the days of the week, and had made disciples for Christ of these mingled Greeks, the same weekly Sabbath as was being observed at Jerusalem would be being observed in North America, right?. In actuality, it would be.

But if a disciple of Thomas' had sailed east from the Indian subcontinent, with the intent of making disciples for Christ of all peoples he encountered—and if this disciple had been equally faithful in observing the weekly Sabbath, when this disciple missed Hawaii and landed on the west coast of North America, this disciple would likewise be keeping the same weekly Sabbath as was being observed at Jerusalem. But this disciple would think that the disciples of the Apostle Paul were keeping the eighth day, not the seventh, when he encountered their fellowships. Disputes would occur. And we would quickly find out how much love exists in the descendants of each original disciple for others of like beliefs, but who are worshiping on the wrong day. Paul's disciples won't understand why Thomas' disciples worship on the sixth day, not on the seventh; and Thomas' disciples will label Paul's as apostate for keeping the day of the sun. And both disciples will be correctly keeping the Sabbath on the seventh day of the week. Eventually they would realize that the earth is round, and that on a sphere, time measured by rotational travel requires a starting/stopping point. They would discover that they need an international date line, which they would most likely establish halfway between their fellowships. Then each would keep the Sabbath on the seventh day, as it should be kept under the new covenant. Respect would return, and war would be averted.

Long ago, we recognized the need for an international date line, an arbitrary starting point for when a day begins, and we established one where it seemed to cause the fewest problems, putting a jag in the line to keep all of Alaska in the same day. Of course, a Yupik can look across the Strait and see his or her cousin waving at the person from tomorrow. So as the sun sets on school kids Friday afternoon in Western Alaska, it also sets on Sabbath keepers in Eastern Siberia an hour later—the Sabbath begins as it ends next door. I have looked into tomorrow, and it looked like today.

The observance of new moons is commanded, just as is keeping the Sabbath and the high days. The sacrifices made on new moons were like the sacrifices made on high days. As Christians, we have seen them listed with the Sabbath, and with high days, but we didn't observe them because we didn't know how we should, or why. But if new moons were being observed, then that what-if example of Paul's and Thomas's disciples meeting in North America would have both fellowships observing the same high days. Paul's disciples would have seen the sign in the spring, and would have began counting their months on the crescent of the moon, with them then commemorating the Passover at even of the 14th of Nissan. Likewise, Thomas' disciples would have done exactly the same thing, just as Jesus had commanded His original disciples to do, then later commanded Paul to do—and before someone embarrasses him or herself by saying that Christ's disciples don't keep the Passover, nor observe the Holy Days, or saying that the weekly Sabbath cycle has been lost, this person needs to hear Christ's voice above the babble of thieves in spiritual Israel's sheepfold. The high sabbaths are binding on new covenant Christians (for more on this subject, request, HIGH DAYS or holidays?). They always have been, even when no one in spiritual Israel was observing them. All that was then happening was spiritual Israel

required Christ to bear additional sins, ones He shouldn't have had to bear, ones He wouldn't have had to bear if spiritual Israel hadn't been as faithless as her shadow, ancient Israel.

Paul's disciples would still be observing the weekly Sabbath one day later than would be Thomas' disciples, but their annual High Sabbath observances would have been on the same day. They would not have had a calculated calendar, nor would they have known that the new moon at Jerusalem was observed a day earlier. They were, as far as Jerusalem was concerned, two autonomous fellowships, each observing exactly the same High Days in exactly the same manner as they were observed at Jerusalem, only one or two days later, depending upon where these two fellowships were geographically located. So the first thing the observance of new moons produces is understanding that spiritual time is to be kept locally.

As I write these words, the moon bright in the western sky, cedar crackling in the stove, I recall, during my thirty years of being in the Body of Christ, hearing many sermons stating that Jerusalem is the focus of God's earthly attention, that all holy time is figured from Jerusalem, that all prophetic directions are in relationship to Jerusalem, that all prophecies are about another physical king of Babylon, a physical beast, a physical false prophet, another physical revival of the Holy Roman Empire, and another physical captivity of the endtime descendants of the ancient house of Israel. I don't ever recall hearing that under the new covenant physical Israel is no longer either God the Father's or His Messiah's primary focus. God's focus is spiritual Israel, who is everyone with the Breath of God in oneself. His attention is now centered on spiritual Jerusalem, a city that has no geographical boundaries, but is walled by the doctrines of Christ internalized by living stones. (Forgive me, I have written all of this before, but too few got it the first time, so you will receive it again.)

Spiritual Israel was taken captive by the spiritual king of Babylon, Satan himself, and this holy nation primarily remains living within the boundaries of Babylon. A remnant people left under a spiritual Ezra, who isn't a man but one of the angels of the seven churches (Rev chpts 2-3), one of the stars in the Son of Man's right hand (Rev 1:16, 20), and this remnant people began to rebuild spiritual Jerusalem, the temple, the walls, the city. But this people quit the work they were given to do, and began building houses for themselves in spiritual Jerusalem. Yes, this Fellowship of Faith—the saints raised up under the leadership of Herbert Armstrong—who had been given the job of rebuilding the scaled-down spiritual temple never understood the difference between physical Israel, with its physical covenant that has been abolished (Eph 2:15), and spiritual Israel, under the new covenant. As a result, the work of this spiritual Ezra has fallen into disrepair. The spiritual temple doesn't house the vessels of God. Those vessels are stored in the homes of men who preferred to build their own houses rather than a House for God. Their own egos stopped them from growing spiritually in 1962. Thus, the walls of spiritual Jerusalem remained as scattered stones among the weeds for forty years.

A spiritual Nehemiah was sent to rebuild the walls of spiritual Jerusalem. He scouted Jerusalem by night, not revealing either his commission or his plans until he was ready to begin construction—and Christ gave him the key of David so he could lock the spiritual city's gates once they were hung.

Because the saints working under the leadership of spiritual Ezra never understood the difference between physical Israel and spiritual Israel, that Fellowship never understood what it thought it knew about leadership and church governance. Its ignorance allowed its

work to be stopped by Satan shooting it in the head, thereby slaughtering a hundred thousand sheep with one bullet (actually, with two shots). And Satan gave me a shooting lesson: on three occasions I have killed two deer with one shot, but never a hundred thousand. However, now that I know it is possible to kill so many with so few bullets, Satan's ministers of righteousness are in my sights. Instead of spiritually picking them off one at a time, hopeful of getting a double once in a while, I'm now aiming at all who mangle the Word of God, knowing that they are lined up like dominos—when the first one falls, he will take down the next one, and the next, and the next, and on until all of humanity is liberated halfway through seven years of Tribulation. Then those who want to serve Satan will have to accept his slave mark, the tattoo of the Cross (Chi xi stigma — from Rev 13:18). Christ will turn His hand against the two-thirds of spiritual Israel (Zech 13:7-8) who won't be ruled by Him. They will experience God the Father's wrath, and while serving the antiChrist, they will actually curse Christ.

The job of this ministry is to fill spiritual Jerusalem with born again Israelites, in covenant with God the Father and His Messiah. There will be a physical place of safety for physical Israelites (i.e., the 144,000 identified in Rev 7:4-8). That place is Mt. Zion, through the split Mount of Olives. But there will also be a spiritual place of safety for spiritual Israelites, the details of which are described in the booklet *Revelation, Unsealed and Revealed*.

Since those who were given the task of rebuilding the spiritual temple and city left off work because their leaders wanted new homes, built with tithe money that should have gone for feeding spiritual Israel better food than barbecued pork and deep-fried catfish at Baptist church suppers, Christ has been revealing doctrines to this ministry, one plank at a time, the next coming as we reach the end of the previous board, with the burnt stones being lined up along each plank's straight edges. Periodically, a stone previously set in place needs to be straightened as we sight along the walls. And many of the stones set in place by spiritual Ezra's workmen have to be rejected. That is the case with all of their work concerning church authority, and spiritual governance.

The observance of High Sabbath days is governed by the calendar, set by observance of the new moons. The ramification of this is initially mind-expanding, since the Southern Hemisphere observes new moons differently than they are observed in the Northern Hemisphere. Likewise, the Western Hemisphere is different than the Eastern.

Let's return to the journeying of Paul's 1st Century disciple, and Thomas's disciple, with both traveling south of their respective locations, and with both meeting somewhere near Capetown, South Africa. The weekly Sabbath now isn't a problem, but Passover comes at harvest time, and the Feast of Ingathering comes when farmers are planting their fields. Something is seriously wrong with this scenario. Another imaginary line like the International Date Line needs to be constructed—and has been; it's called the Equator.

If each disciple were to retrace his steps, beginning his southern journey over again, each disciple would find that Passover and the harvest come at their appropriate seasons in Egypt, but the seasons blur into a wet versus dry season south of Egypt, with the wet months twisting around the calendar like beans stalks searching for sunshine until the months that were dry have become wet, except in drought years when all of the months are dry. When warm and cold seasons finally reappear, the new moons will have become mirror images of themselves. The harvest moon appears in the fall as it should. Likewise, the hunter moon appears when it should. If a person weren't to consult a calendar, the new moons governing the scheduled High Sabbaths have the sabbaths matching their

appropriate seasons, with Passover in the Spring and Tabernacles in the Fall. Only one problem, physical Jerusalem's seasons are six months out of whack with the world of Capetown, or Perth.

Why should physical Jerusalem's seasons influence when a spiritual Israelite in Capetown keeps his or her Fall High Days? Tabernacles should be kept on the harvest moon, not on a full moon in the spring of the year. A spiritual Israelite in Capetown, who observes new moons there and who doesn't have contact with London, will set God's calendar to match his or her seasons. And I have just stepped on many toes, who have been trained to keep Christmas in the middle of summer . . . even in Alaska, snowmen melt in July. Who, in the Northern Hemisphere, would even consider keeping Christmas in July, not that a person ought to be observing Christmas? The customs are inappropriate. Likewise, the divinely inspired customs attached to Tabernacles are inappropriate for a spring time feast. While the customs of Christmas will change with geographical locations, that is not the case with the festivals of God. Their customs remain. When the feasts occur will change.

Christ's Millennium reign doesn't occur before Christ comes as our Savior—and this is how disciples in the Southern Hemisphere have been observing the plan of God. We cannot reach behind us to give Satan our sins when we begin to live sinfree during the Days of Unleavened Bread. It makes no sense for Christ's disciples to be impregnated with the Holy Spirit before Christ is glorified. So why would a spiritual Israelite in Perth so set his or her sacred calendar to have Christ come a second time before He comes the first time? I was in Alaska when Worldwide changed when the Sabbath was to be kept in high latitudes, leaving the inspired tradition of beginning the day at sunset and adopting the human tradition of beginning the day at 6:00 p.m. above sixty degrees North latitude. I wanted to know why Pasadena was messing with something that didn't need changed. All of us had managed to get along with the early Sabbath (Christ's promise to us). Likewise, someone in Perth will want to know why I'm messing with something that they have managed to make work for them. Well, if it works for them, fine. They are autonomous fellowships that are responsible to Christ and the Father for their practices, which should include observing new moons. What I write on this cold night is that it makes no sense for them to be bound to a tradition that is actually contrary to spiritual intent. They, not me, not Pasadena, not Cincinnati, not anywhere in the United States, not Jews in Jerusalem, have the authority to set their own calendar.

How and when a spiritual fellowship observes High Days connects that fellowship to one of the seven angels of the seven churches on that ancient mail route. If it is more important for that fellowship to link itself with physical Jerusalem than with spiritual Jerusalem, then that fellowship is not of the angel to the Church in Philadelphia. I am, probably, to that fellowship someone who attempts to change times and seasons. Really, I am not, because my authority is over my words, not over the particular fellowship who is free to either hear Christ's voice in my words, or not to hear it. Just one sentence of caution: don't link yourself tightly to physical Jerusalem, for that will be the seat of Satan, who will come as the true antiChrist.

Concerning governance, the question that should now be asked, if all churches are to speak the same things, each keeping Jerusalem dates—and if the headquarters church at Jerusalem cannot accurately set the date for when a disciple in California fasts on Yom Kippurim, but must assign an arbitrary date, then is not the headquarters church's authority over a California fellowship also arbitrary? (I'm using equivocation as the Apostle

Paul does.) What authority can a half-a-world-away administration really exercise over a fellowship, when both the headquarters church and the distant fellowship are jointly under the authority of Christ Jesus? From a practical standpoint, not much, if those in charge of each practice servant-leadership.

The responsibility of the more spiritually mature fellowship is to disciple those individuals and fellowships who are less mature. The autocratic, top-down government practiced by Herbert Armstrong and still practiced by his spiritual successors is actually contrary to how Christ established authority in spiritual Israel. Did James tell Paul how to conduct affairs in Corinth, or what to preach during his stay at Antioch? Did Paul approve of Peter's ordinations? or vice versa? How many Apostles were preaching at any one time? We know many of them came together at Jerusalem for the conference recorded in Acts 15, but how coordinated were their efforts otherwise?

Why does Paul write to Gentile converts at Rome? Does he write as their Pastor-General? Does he write as their spiritual leader, or guru? Or does he write to impart some of the spiritual wisdom he has been given? He would have delivered this wisdom in person, but up until then, he had been prevented from going to Rome (Rom 1:11). To the Gentile converts at Rome, Paul writes, "Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I glorify my ministry in order to make my own people jealous, and thus save some of them" (11:13-14). Likewise, I write to you, spiritual Israel, so that some of you might be saved. I have been drafted to write the literature for the spiritual Church in Philadelphia. We have rebuilt the walls of spiritual Jerusalem. Come, live in the city. Houses await you. You need to flee Babylon. Now is the better time. Later will likely result in martyrdom.

Paul ruled the churches he helped raise up with a light hand. Christ rules with a light hand. Spiritual governance is based upon love, administered with a very light hand that always lifts up the one who is ruled. It is not a top-down autocratic administration. It is standing beside you, waiting for that first sliver of the new moon to appear, eager to celebrate its arrival with you where you are at.

Roosters have begun to crow. The eastern sky has become gray as the darkness again fails. And I shake my head in disbelief that I would enter a fray where spiritual giants grapple as overweight sumo wrestlers, grotesque in their gluttony. I wouldn't venture an opinion if Christ hadn't given an understanding I cannot yet fully express. He intends that His endtime Church be organized somewhat like the Internet is, with each user attached directly to Him so that the lines of communication cannot be cut by Satan. His Bride is to count Her own months, as she would if she were a physical woman. The monthly cycle of the wife of the high priest in Jerusalem has no bearing on my wife's monthly cycle, so why should I ask him to observe new moons for me? The calendar was to remain with physical Israelites only for as long as the temple sacrifices lasted. Christ knew they would end shortly, what the writer of Hebrews says (8:13). Christ also knew that spiritual Israel would quickly outgrow the boundaries of the Middle East, Near East, Europe, and North Africa. In the 2nd-Century, how would a disciple in Normandy, or in Wales know when to observe Passover if the disciple were not observing new moons, which is why the original Apostles taught the Gentile converts at Colossae to observe festivals, new moons, and sabbaths. We are today to teach converts to observe all three types of high days.

The night has been long and cold, but the day will be very bright, here, in spiritual Jerusalem. Yes, it will be exceedingly bright. Amen.

"The Scripture quotations contained herein are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright, 1989, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Used by permission. All rights reserved."