

PAGAN CHRISTIANITY OR BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY?  
HOW CHRISTIANITY ABSORBED PAGANISM AND THE  
NEED TO RESTORE THE TRUE BIBLICAL (HEBRAIC) ROOTS

Very early in the history of Christianity, paganism was assimilated by the Church of Rome to form a false, apostate church, clearly identified as the Harlot of Revelation 17. God tells His people to come out of this apostate religious system:

Revelation 18:4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, “Come out of her, my people, that you may not participate in her sins and that you may not receive of her plagues.”

The Protestant Reformation was a response to the call of God to separate from the Apostate Church of Rome. Even though Protestant churches separated from Rome, rejecting Papal authority, the Roman Catholic priesthood, and a ritualistic, works-based system of salvation, other aspects of Roman Catholicism that had its origins in paganism remained.

One of these aspects relates to the true Biblical Holy Days – the Appointed Times of the Lord – that provide the prophetic framework and timetable for God’s master plan of redemption: the true Biblical Sabbath (not Sunday); the true Passover (not Easter); Feast of Unleavened Bread; the true Pentecost – (Shavuot) – (not Pentecost as observed by Christianity today which does not follow the Biblical Calendar); Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah); Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur); and Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot).

One of Satan’s greatest accomplishments was the removal of God’s Holy Days and replacement with pagan holidays. Christians have been deceived into following pagan holidays and thinking they are Biblical. As a result, Satan has greatly obscured the truth about God’s prophetic pattern, framework, and timetable and robbed believers of much more fully understanding God’s master plan of redemption and the beauty and precision of how it has been and continues to be fulfilled. God’s entire prophetic calendar has been stolen away from believers.

The man used by Satan to accomplish the removal of God’s Appointed Times was the Roman Emperor Constantine, an avowed sun-god worshipper, fulfilling Daniel’s prophecy regarding the person who desired to change God’s Appointed Times and God’s commandments:

Daniel 7:25 And he [the Roman Emperor Constantine] will speak out against the Most High [God] and wear down the saints [believers] of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in [God’s Appointed] times and in [God’s] law ...

In the 300s, the Roman Emperor Constantine established the Church of Rome, uniting pagans and Christians into one church, a false church that corrupted Biblical truth by its assimilation of paganism. Throughout the centuries, more and more unbiblical traditions, doctrines, rituals, etc. have been added. Wherever the Church of Rome has spread, it has allowed the absorption of native pagan beliefs and practices, rather than teach pure Biblical truth and separation from paganism.

God ordained the Biblical Sabbath and Biblical Holy Days as a sign. The purpose of God's Appointed Times is to point to His Messiah, Yeshua (Jesus). The prophetic pictures, patterns, and timetable of God's plan of redemption for humanity are revealed by the Biblical Holy Days and provide solid irrefutable proof that Yeshua is the Messiah promised by God.

God's Word is clear that paganism is not to be mixed with Biblical truth. We at Messengers of Messiah believe that believers need to separate from the paganism of Christianity and return to the solid Biblical (Hebraic) roots of our faith. This includes learning about and understanding the prophetic picture of the Holy Days God ordained. It is not the ritual observance that is important, but taking into our hearts and minds the truth of what these prophetic days teach us. God is looking for a circumcised heart, not literal circumcision of the flesh. God said He would write His laws in the hearts (spirits) of human beings (Jeremiah 31:31-33; Matthew 22:37-40). That is the essence of the New Covenant and is made possible by the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit.

There are those who advocate strict observance of the Biblical Sabbath (Friday evening to Saturday evening) and the annual Sabbaths, the Biblical Holy Days, observed throughout the year. They are referred to as Sabbath-Keepers and/or Torah-Observant. We do not agree that observance is required for salvation. We stress the importance of understanding the meanings of the Appointed Times of the Lord that point to Messiah Yeshua. Salvation is by God's grace alone, by faith (trust) alone, by the atoning work of Messiah Yeshua alone. Salvation in whole or in part cannot be accomplished by any human being's actions. It is a gift of God:

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.

We agree with the Apostle Paul on this matter:

Colossians 2:16-17 Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—things which are a (mere) shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ [Messiah Yeshua].

Believers are NOT to be judged with regard to whether or not they observe the Biblical Sabbath or the annual Biblical Holy Days. However, what Paul said is NOT to be taken as approval of or justification for replacing God's Holy Days with pagan holidays (for example, Christmas and Easter). Paul was clearly referring to the Biblical Sabbath and Appointed Times of the Lord ("festival", "new moon", and "Sabbath day"), not to pagan holidays.

Each and every believer should follow the Holy Spirit of God as to what to do regarding the issue of Sabbath observance. Important point: Refraining from gainful employment on the Sabbath is the heart of the matter rather than all the many other restrictions that have been added by rabbinic "authorities".

Many Christians believe that the Biblical Sabbath day was changed to Sunday because of the erroneous teaching that Messiah Yeshua resurrected on a Sunday. However, as documented in detail in our book, *The Rod of an Almond Tree in God's Master Plan*, the Greek text clearly states the day of the resurrection was Saturday, not Sunday. This is also verified by the calendar date for the year 30 AD, the correct year of the crucifixion: the crucifixion was on a Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, and the resurrection was on a Saturday, the 17<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, according to the Biblical Hebraic Calendar.

It is good to set apart the Sabbath as a day of rest, time for God and family, but we urge those who do so to keep the intent clearly in their hearts. It is also important to note that many of the rituals associated with the Sabbath and Biblical Holy Days as they are observed today include much that is based upon rabbinic Judaism, not Biblical commandments. And it is certainly not good to develop a legalistic, arrogant, or judgmental attitude. Nor is it good for Sabbath observance to become a burden. Seek and follow the Spirit of God in all that you do so that what you do is in accordance with God's will, and you will be blessed.

#### MORE ABOUT THE WEEKLY SABBATH DAY

All the Ten Commandments are repeated in the New Testament (Covenant) except one, the Sabbath. Yeshua said: "I am Lord of the Sabbath". Let's read the entire context of this passage:

Matthew 12:1-8 At that time Jesus [Yeshua] went on the Sabbath through the grainfields, and His disciples became hungry and began to pick the heads of grain and eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, "Behold, Your disciples do what is not lawful to do on a Sabbath." But He said to them, "Have you not read what David did, when he became hungry, he and his companions; how he entered the house [temple] of God, and they ate the consecrated bread, which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those with him, but for the priests alone? Or have you not read in the Law, that on the Sabbath the priest in the temple break the Sabbath, and are innocent? But I say to you, that something greater than the temple is here. But if

you had known what this means, 'I desire compassion, and not a sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent. For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

Yeshua is Lord of the Sabbath. We are to look to Him as our Sabbath at all times, not just on one day of the week. And any and every day of the week is acceptable for the study of God's Word and worship of God.

That having been said, God did establish the seventh day of the week as the weekly day of rest (Genesis 2:2-3). God created Sabbath for human beings to cease from their labors and seek their Creator. Yeshua said that Sabbath was created for man, not that man was created for the Sabbath.

Mark 2:27 And He was saying to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."

God has given human beings six days for work, and one day for rest. The body has a requirement for physical rest that is necessary to maintaining good health.

Human beings also need to set time aside for God and for family. God set aside one day a week for this purpose as well.

Yeshua dealt with the religious leaders of His day who judged Him for not observing the Sabbath as they deemed was required. But Yeshua made it clear that there are exceptions to observing Sabbath, particularly when it comes to the well being of human beings and even animals.

Mark 2:25-26 And He said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he was in need and became hungry, he and his companions: how he entered the house of God in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the consecrated bread, which is not lawful for anyone to eat except the priests, and he gave it also to those who were with him?"

Luke 14:5 And He said to them, Which one of you shall have a son or an ox fall into a well, and will not immediately pull him out on a Sabbath day?"

The importance is in learning what the Biblical Holy Days and Sabbath teach us about the coming of the Messiah: the first time, and His future return. They teach us God's plan of redemption for humankind through the Messiah. They point to the one, true Messiah in every prophetic detail. They teach us the proper form of worship, how to live our lives in accordance with God's will, and to understand the prophetic events which are leading up to His second coming.