

# Destroying THE SABBATH

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The seventh-day Sabbath is one of the only two pre-sin institutions (the other being marriage) given to mankind. Society today has a myriad ways that aim at the destruction of the sacred marriage institution. On the other hand, there is a similar destructive effort that is aimed at the Sabbath. This time it is not from secular society, but from the very ranks of Sabbath keepers themselves. This attack bears the semblance of honouring and uplifting the Sabbath, but in reality is nothing short of the very destruction of the Sabbath.



## **An Unbiblical Equation**

The method of attack we are dealing with lies in equating the eternal Sabbath with other days and seasons of an inferior and transitory nature. Namely, the feast days of the Mosaic dispensation. It is by bundling the Sabbath together with the Jewish feasts of the Old Covenant, and in practical conduct treating them as equally valid, perpetual and instilled with a mysterious blessing. The distinction and vast contrast between the Sabbath and the feast days is downplayed if not totally ignored. This equation of two very different institutions (attaching an inferior one to a superior one) and packaging them together results in the destruction of the Sabbath. In an effort to bolster up the validity of the feasts the exclusive superior qualities are leached from the Sabbath and infused into the feast days. This process results in lowering and destroying the Sabbath in order to enhance and build-up the feast days. At times, there is an effort to downplay this equalization by stating that the feast days channel and multiply the Sabbath blessing. That the Sabbath is still the head and source but the feast days serve as a conduit to transmit the very same blessing and holiness that the Sabbath contains. While it seems to maintain the superiority of the Sabbath, this approach treats the feasts and Sabbath equally in practice and conduct. This is the point we are seeking to explore; treating the feast days today as equal extensions of the seventh day Sabbath. The danger of this line of reasoning is simple. It's not biblical. It is pure conjecture and presumption that attempts to bind together that which God has never declared to be such. In so doing, the Sabbath is actually destroyed.

## The Resemblance

Before we explore the differences that distinguish between the Sabbath and the feasts we need to explore the similarity. It is this similarity that gives rise to equating the two and treating them in the same manner. The main point of similarity is outlined in this passage:

*Leviticus 23:2-4 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts. (3) Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings. (4) These are the feasts of the LORD, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons.*

The reasoning goes that the Sabbath is a feast like all the other feasts, and since God mentioned them all together then they stand or fall together. This is reading too much into the passage. God is simply stating that the feast days were to be kept in a very similar manner to the Sabbath. Furthermore, the Hebrew word used for feasts here is 'Moed' which simply means appointment or set time. The feasts are new appointments set up for Israel in a similar manner that the Sabbath was an appointment set up for mankind. God was adding more set times (feast times) for gatherings that are like the Sabbath and even contain special days called Sabbaths (annual). Far from equating the two, this similarity simply proves that both the Sabbath and the feast days are set times of appointment. When we examine their origin and purpose the stark differences become very apparent.

## The Differences

So what is the difference between the seventh-day Sabbath of creation and the feast days of the Jewish economy? There are actually many which we can list briefly in the following table:

<b>The seventh-day Sabbath (weekly)</b>	<b>Feast days and their annual Sabbaths</b>
Instituted at creation, before sin (Gen.2:2)	Instituted at the Exodus, well after sin (and because of sin) (Ex.12)
God rested on it (Gen.2:2)	No record of such
Blessed and sanctified by God (Gen.2:3)	No record of such
Made for man (Mark 2:27)	Made for the Jews (Ex.12:14; Num.15:3; Amos 5:21; John 6:4)
Pointed back to creation (Ex.20:11)	Pointed forward to the coming saviour (1 Cor.5:7)
Preceded the sacrificial system (Gen.2)	Was later added to the sacrificial system (and given to offer sacrifices) (Lev.23:37)
Not a shadow or a type	Shadows and types (Col.2:16, 17; Heb.10:1)
Not tied to a calendar (Ex.20:8-11)	Tied to a calendar (Lev.23:5, 6)
Global	Tied to Jerusalem & the Temple (Deu.16:6, 15)
Moral & Eternal (God has never revoked it)	Temporary & Ceremonial (Gal.3:19; Col.2:16, 17; Heb.10:1)

This is how God distinguished between these two institutions. The contrast is so overwhelming that one will immediately see the danger of mingling that which God has so distinctly separated. It's also very clear that the feast days were given for a particular people to perform a specific purpose; to serve as types and shadows till the coming of the Seed. The Sabbath day was given to a sin free world and serves as a reminder of God's creative power, and a weekly appointment to connect with our creator.

### **Protecting the Sabbath**

It is for this reason that God makes a clear distinction between the Sabbath and the feasts. There is a protective hedge around the Sabbath that we are to maintain. To tear down this hedge is to destroy the Sabbath, not exalt it. Mingling the shadowy typical feasts with the Sabbath implies that the Sabbath is also shadowy and typical. As a matter of fact, I have actually heard ideas to that effect. Far from strengthening the Sabbath, such a union with the feasts invites people to more readily reject the Sabbath. After all, far too many people are aware of the biblical truth that the feasts served as shadows to point forward to the salvation work of the Messiah. How amazing it is that a theory that destroys the Sabbath can be so appealing and inviting to Sabbath keepers today. We cannot underestimate the enemy and his devices in seeking to undermine God's authority and attack the eternal memorial of God's creative power.

### **What about Ellen White?**

I want to include this section because I am sure someone will ask this question. Someone may think of a quote or a passage that they believe supports the need to keep the feasts today and treat them just like the Sabbath. Do we have any evidence in the Spirit of Prophecy that we can consult? The answer is yes, and the evidence, naturally, is in harmony with the Bible picture presented above.

Here is how the seventh day Sabbath is described:

“In Eden, God set up the memorial of His work of creation, in placing His blessing upon the seventh day. **The Sabbath was committed to Adam, the father and representative of the whole human family.** Its observance was to be an act of grateful acknowledgment, on the part of all who should dwell upon the earth, that God was their Creator and their rightful Sovereign; that they were the work of His hands and the subjects of His authority. **Thus the institution was wholly commemorative, and given to all mankind. There was nothing in it shadowy or of restricted application to any people.**” {PP 48.1}

“**There is no shadow in the precepts of the decalogue. The ten commandments are not a type.**” {RH, July 15, 1890 par. 5}

The Sabbath is neither a type nor a shadow. What about the feast days? Does she place them in the same category?

“**The passover** had been observed to commemorate the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt. **It had been both commemorative and typical.** The type had reached the antitype when Christ, the Lamb of God without blemish, died upon the cross.” {3SG 225.1}

“The **Feast of Tabernacles** was not only commemorative but **typical.**” {PP 541.2}

This typical system, of which the feasts were a part, ended at the cross. These types are also referred to as a shadow.

“While the death of Christ, as we have seen, **brought the law of types and shadows, or the ceremonial law,** to an end, it did not in the least detract from the dignity of the moral law, or make it void.” {ST, July 15, 1880 par. 13}

“Christ is the substance, or body, which casts its shadow back into former dispensations. When Christ died, the shadow ceased. **At the death of Christ, the typical system was done away; but the law of God, whose violation had made the plan of salvation necessary, was magnified and made honourable.**” {BEcho, July 15, 1893 par. 8}

Note the contrast that is made here between these two systems. One was typical and done away; the other was not. The feasts belong to the former; the Sabbath to the latter. Failing to recognize this distinction was the great mistake of the Jews.

“The Jews reject Christ, and therefore their whole system of religion is to them indefinite, unexplainable, and uncertain. **They attach as much importance to shadowy ceremonies of types which have met their antitype, as they do to the law of the ten commandments,** which was not a shadow, but a reality as enduring as the throne of Jehovah.” {RH, May 6, 1875 par. 17}

The same mistake is be made today by bundling the feasts with the Sabbath.

“**If those who claim to believe the sacred truth for this time should go back to the practice of the ceremonial observances required from the Jews,** what kind of a representation would be made before angels and before men? We should use the utmost care to cleanse every corner of the heart from sin. **Those who, in the place of cleansing the soul-temple, perform outward ceremonies, thinking that these will recommend them to God, will find themselves enshrouded in spiritual darkness, even as were the Jews.**” {3MR 55.4, 5}

### **Summary of Ellen White quotes**

Using the writings of a non-feast keeper to promote feast keeping is the greatest evidence that the idea is totally groundless. The clear distinction between the Sabbath and the feast days is very apparent in the writings of Ellen White. Here are the key points we found:

- The Sabbath is not a shadow or a type
- Feasts were ceremonial shadowy types
- They were part of the ceremonial law
- This system of shadowy types ended at the cross
- Shadowy ceremonies cannot be equated with the 10 commandments
- Practicing ceremonial observances today leads to spiritual darkness

### **Conclusion**

To attach the shadowy feast days to the creation Sabbath is one of the means of destroying the Sabbath. It is based on the same reasoning that leads to other related errors such as the lunar Sabbaths. After all, if the feasts and the seventh-day Sabbath are in the same category, then they should both be calculated by the same calendar. To attach the eternal Sabbath to a temporary typical institution is to cast a shadow of doubt on the Sabbath. It distorts the picture that God paints for us in the Bible and destroys it. It is a sad deception to believe that feast keeping brings one closer to God, while viewing those who merely keep the Sabbath and not the feasts as farther from God. This makes a ceremonial outward observance the means of approaching God. Is this not the very heart of Phariseeism? To present feast keeping as a condition to receive further blessings from God (which are withheld from those who do not keep the feasts) is to speak on God's behalf when God has not spoken. God has blessed the seventh day Sabbath, let us be careful to protect the Sabbath and not burden or crowd it with things that God never intended. ✍

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