

# **Notes on the History of Passover Observance amongst Sabbatarians since the 18<sup>th</sup> Century**

**Assembled by Craig M White  
Version 1.7**





## ***Notes on the History of Passover Observance***

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### **Associated Readings**

- *Do Church Eras Exist?*
- *Doctrines of the Sabbatharians since the First Century*
- *Historic Sabbatarian and Church of God Fundamentals of Belief*
- *History of the Feast of Tabernacles in the Radio/Worldwide Church of God*
- *Passover and Holy Day Observances since the First Century*

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Our purpose and desire is to foster Biblical, historical and related studies that strengthen the Church of God's message & mission and provides further support to its traditional doctrinal positions.

## Introductory Remarks

Questions arise as to whether the Sabbatarians and Churches of God observed the Passover over the last 200-300 years – either some or most of them. This has led me to assemble the information below and trust that it helps people seeking answers. Several years ago this author had previously written and released *Passover and Holy Day Observances since the First Century*. These notes are limited to only the Passover for a three-century period.

A recent query motivated me to assemble these notes and I thought it high time to respond to Ralph Orr's article "Has God's Church always kept the Passover?" *Reviews You Can Use*, March-April 1993, pp. 31-32 (the old Worldwide Church of God's periodical for pastors and elders). Here is an extract:

"Some in the Church believe that God's Church has always kept both the Sabbath and the Passover. So important is the meaning of the Passover to Christians that it is assumed that God's Church would have always observed it. Of course it's also assumed that the Church would have observed Passover not as Jews do, but instead would have enjoined the New Testament emblems of "bread" and "the fruit of the vine" as symbols of the crucified Christ.

But are the assumptions correct? Has the Church of God always kept the Passover? ...

In 1845 that situation began to change. In Philadelphia small Sabbatarian Adventist group observed their first Passover Communion. Lead by "Brother J.L. Boyd" and "Sister U.S. Minor," this small church observed the Lord's Supper using bread and grape juice to commemorate Jesus' death. They also washed one another's feet, following Jesus' Passover example. They continued this practice alone for 30 years before they ever found any others who agreed with them." (p. 31)

"From about 1860 until 1890, the church paper published assorted opinions about when, how often and with what the Lord's Supper should be observed. In the early part of that period, most Church of God ministers kept Communion at different times of the year, some as often as quarterly. Yet gradually the idea that the Lord's Supper should be observed only once a year, and then only on the Passover, became universally accepted. Even the name Passover to replace Lord's Supper. This in turn led to questions about the other Holy Days. Today, the Church of God (Seventh Day) prefers the term Lord's Supper. In that way they make it clear that though they observe Communion on the Passover, no one should conclude that they observe the Holy Days." (p. 32)

In these notes, I demonstrate that there is more to it than Mr Orr suggests. Perhaps he did not have access to all the relevant information at the time of writing? What I would agree with is that we do not have all the records at hand or there aren't any – because they are either lost or records were not kept. There are, however, some records including those gathered by researcher Richard Nickels (1947-2006) which Orr refers to in his article. A portion of Richard's research can be found in the **Appendix. Extracts from 2 books by Richard Nickels.**

NB: I term this research notes because it is not an article or paper as such. It is, in reality, in the pre-paper stage.

## **Passover and Lord's Supper in Statements of Belief**

First of all, let us examine the following extracts from the collection *Historic Church of God and Sabbatarian Fundamentals of Belief* which this author assembled some years ago.

### **Articles of Faith of the Church of God, Piscataway (later known as Sabbatarian Baptists and eventually Seventh Day Baptists) (1705)**

V. We believe that the Lord's Supper ought to be administered and received in all Christian churches. Luke 2:19, I Corinthians. 11:23, 26.

### **Articles of Faith of the Church of Christ (later known as Sabbatarian Baptists and eventually Seventh Day Baptists) (1774)**

"10th. We believe that the Lord's Supper ought to be administered and received in all Christian churches.

### **Beliefs and Doctrines of the Sabbatarian Baptists (Seventh Day Baptists) (1809)**

"... likewise in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper ..."

### **Doctrines of the South Fork of Hughes River Seventh Day Baptists (1840s)**

10. From the South Fork records, "March 20, 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."

11. Footwashing was observed by the South Fork church and some of the other churches in western Virginia. It had been a Shrewsbury practice.

### **Fundamental Doctrines of the Remnant of Israel group (early 1900s)**

There was some controversy over the keeping of Passover. The June 1919 Remnant states that Passover should be taken on the beginning of the 14th of the first Jewish month, Nisan. In the 1928-29 papers, some supported the 14th, others the 15th. Mrs. W. Moore wrote that Jesus did eat the Passover, and Christians are also to keep it on the evening of the 14th.

### **Fundamental Doctrines of the Church of God (unattached) (early 1900s)**

8. That the Lord's Supper service was instituted by Christ to take the place of the ancient Passover, and should be observed annually, at the time of the Passover.

**What the Church of God Believes, and Why (General Conference of the Church of God) (1917)**

40. We believe that the ordinance of the Passover or 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.

**Doctrinal Statements of the Church of God (7th Day), Salem, West Virginia (1933)**

(19) THAT the Lord's Supper is to be observed annually, on the beginning of the Passover, the 14th of Nisan, an after the example of Jesus –Ex. 12:6; 13:10; Lev. 23:5; Luke 22:8–17. Lord's Supper, a perpetual ordinance until fulfilled in the Kingdom of God. Verses 16, 18.

**Fundamentals of Belief, Radio Church of God (1938)**

11. We believe in TWO ORDINANCES for this age; water baptism by immersion, into Jesus Christ (not a denomination) for the remission of sins, following genuine repentance; and the Lord's Supper as continuation of the Passover, observed at night on the anniversary of the death of our Saviour, the 14th of Abib.

**What the Church of God Believes; and Why (Church of God, Seventh Day) (1949)**

The Lord's Supper

13. The Lord's Supper is an ordinance given to the Church as a memorial of the death of Christ, and it is to be observed annually on the beginning of the fourteenth of the Hebrew month Nisan. Unleavened bread and unfermented grape juice should be used in this service as emblems of the broken body and the shed blood of Christ. Lev 23:5, 27,32; Matt. 26:26-29; Luke 22:7-21, 29, 30; 1 Cor. 11:1,2,18-31; 5:7; John 19:14, 15,31.

Feet Washing

14. The ordinance of feet washing was given by Jesus as an example for us, to teach humility, and is to be practiced in connection with the observance of the Lord's Supper. John 13; Luke 14:11; James 4:10; 1 Peter 2:21; 1 Tim. 5:9,10.

**Fundamentals of Belief, Radio Church of God (late 1940s)**

11. We believe in TWO ORDINANCES for this age; water baptism by immersion, into Jesus Christ (not a denomination) for the remission of sins, following genuine repentance; and the Lord's Supper as continuation of the Passover, observed at night on the anniversary of the death of our Saviour, the 14th of Abib.

NB: the Passover and Lord's Supper are not mentioned directly in **Articles of Faith of the Church of Christ (later renamed Church of God) (1863)** or the **Articles of Faith of the General Conference of the Church of God (1888)**.

## Old Church of God (Seventh Day) Booklets and Articles

### Booklet and tracts:

- *Our Passover*, C.O. Dodd, 15pp (1930s).
- *Thoughts on the Lord's Supper, or "The Christian Passover,"* W.C. Long, 16 pp. (1906/07).
- *The Passover and the Lord's Supper*, H.T. Whitehall, 8 pp. (1913-16).
- *The Lord's Supper. Is it a weekly, monthly, quarterly, or yearly institution?* A.N. Dugger (1920s).
- *The Lord's Supper* (tract) N.N. (1920s).

### Periodical articles:

#### *Hope of Israel*

**28 Oct 1863** Article on "The Late Conference" mentions that "The Lord's Supper, and washing of feet were attended to on First-day eve" (p. 2).

**23 April 1867** "The Proper Time for Celebrating the Lord's Supper and Communion" by Samuel Chonce which stated that the Church used once "observed the Lord's Supper annually at the beginning of the fourteenth of Abib, and that we should now show His death until He comes, by also observing it at the beginning of the fourteenth." (p. 179)

#### *Advent and Sabbath Advocate and the Hope of Israel*

**12 March 1872** "The Passover a Christian Institution" argues for the annual Passover. "That a supper preceded the institution of the new Passover is clear." (p. 150)

**26 March 1872** "The Testimony of History on the Passover" by S.D. argues against a weekly Lord's Supper. He states that "Strictly speaking it [the NT Passover] is not called the Lord's Supper ... The Lord's supper was the preparatory Paschal Love Feast. The Passover with all its Christian considerations attending, is its proper name and designation. The time is the observance in the night which Scripturally belongs to the fourteenth day of the vernal moon, as that was the night on which our Saviour was betrayed. For 1872 it is the first day of the week, March 24<sup>th</sup> ..." (p. 155)

**26 March 1872** Letter: "In the Hope of Feb 27<sup>th</sup>, page 142, is an article on That Christian Passover and its Significance over the signature S. D. and in it he says "The old Passover was always observed on the annual return of the same night in which it was first instituted. The Christian Passover was instituted on the same night of the same day on which the Lord was betrayed and crucified, and there is no other time given for its celebration but the annual return of the same night." Now I would ask S. D. Did Paul celebrate the Lord's supper at Troas on the annual return of the same night in which it was first instituted, as we read in Acts 20:6-11, or was it some 17 days afterward?" (p. 160)

***The Bible Advocate and Herald of the Coming Kingdom***

**15 March 1937** “True Christian Observance of the Lord’s Supper” by D. A. Davis (pp. 10-11) on how to observe the Passover.

**April 1968** “How to Reckon the Lord’s Supper Time” by John Kiesz (pp. 11-12, 31).

**Extracts from *Passover and Holy Day Observances since the First Century***

This writer assembled the paper *Passover and Holy Day Observances since the First Century* some years ago. The table below is extracted from that paper.

Eighteenth Century		
Transylvanian sabbatarians	As above	Observed all holy days
Sabbatarian Baptists	<i>What Became of the Church Jesus Built?</i> pp. 193-94 <sup>1</sup>	Observed annual meetings during the Feast of Tabernacles in 1700s from time-to-time. Many practiced foot-washing <sup>2</sup>

  

Nineteenth Century		
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>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *What Became of the Church Jesus Built?*:

“... 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. It is significant that this date falls during the Feast of Tabernacles time for that year. ...

Says Bailey, “The (General or Yearly) meeting was regarded somewhat in the light of the yearly feasts of the Jews, when all the tribes went up to Jerusalem to worship. It was a time when the members of the Church, generally, were expected to come together for a spiritual re-union” (*The Seventh-Day Baptist General Conference*, p. 20-21; see page 124 also) ...

Annual meeting dates consistently fell either during the fall Holy Day season or near Pentecost (*The Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America*, pp. 127, 150-52, 174, 602, 614). The earliest of which we now have record was held in late May, 1684. None of these meetings came at Christmas, Easter, or even in midsummer. This was not mere chance! On the other hand, they did not seem to feel it necessary to keep them on the *exact* dates specified in the Bible or the full time, and instead of keeping the true Passover, most of them were merely “breaking bread” as the annual meetings and every two or three months locally.” (pp. 193-94)

<sup>2</sup> This is discussed in Randolph’s *A History of the Seventh Day Baptists in West Virginia*, pp. 14-16.

<sup>3</sup> Regarding the 16th century Transylvanian Sabbatarians, “By the end of the mid 17th 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/>



Nineteenth Century		
John Adams on Pitcairn Island	<i>Pitcairn. Island at the Edge of Time</i> , p. 34 <sup>4</sup>	The book, of course, mentions the SDA influence on the island, but also that the leader of the islanders in the early 1800s, John Adams, kept and taught the Feast Days. Apparently, he was led to this belief by reading the Bible and it is unknown if any others followed his example.
An unattached group in Philadelphia	<i>History of the Church of God (7<sup>th</sup> Day)</i> , p. 66 <sup>5</sup>	Observed Passover including footwashing in 1845
Various	David Arnold believed in an annual Lord's Supper/Passover <sup>6</sup> Various Sabbatarian groups observed Passover on 14 Abib <sup>7</sup>	James and Ellen G White were aware of this but evidently did not agree

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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>4</sup> *Pitcairn: Island at the Edge of Time* by S.C. Carlsson, p. 34.

<sup>5</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 14th day of the first month of the Hebrew year." (p. 25)

<sup>6</sup> *Captains of the Host* by W Spalding Sabbath conferences were held 1847/48:

"So the Whites went to New York. It was their first meeting with Hiram Edson. Bates, Gurney, and Chamberlain also attended from New England. The meeting was held in David Arnold's barn, at Volney. About thirty-five were present, all who could be collected from that part of the State. But there were nearly thirty-five different creeds; "there were hardly two agreed." David Arnold evidently had imbibed some of the heterodox views of George Storrs' party ... **objecting to the celebration of the Lord's supper except at the time of the Passover**, of which he said it was the continuation. Many other errors were brought forward by different ones, and the conference was in discord." (p. 176)

<sup>7</sup> Dugger and Dodd in their *A True History of the True Religion* asserted the following:

"Thus being isolated from fellowship with one another, we find companies in one place called the Church of Christ, in another place the Church of God, while in other communities they were simply called 'Sabbatarian Congregations,' but the belief was practically the same. They stood for the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, observing the true Sabbath, **keeping the Lord's Supper yearly on the 14<sup>th</sup> of the first month.**" (*A History of the True Religion, Traced From 33 A.D. to Date*, 2003, p. 252)

"The truth of the matter was that the church had met on the night in question, which was the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, in the spring time, which was the month and day which were kept as the Passover by the children of God from the night that God, by the hand of Moses, led them out of the land of Egypt... In other words, the Wilbur [in West Virginia] brethren were **celebrating the annual observance of the Lord's Supper. Being on the fourteenth day**, it was the same as when Jesus ate it with His disciples. Being at night, it was the same time that He ate it." (ibid., p. 314)

Nineteenth Century		
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>8</sup>	Observed Passover in the 1850s
Seventh Month Movement	Various sources	A movement within the SDAs in the mid-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. <sup>9</sup> In addition, many other groups observed the Feasts <sup>10 11</sup>
Church of God	<i>The Journey</i> , pp.182-3 <sup>12</sup> and "A Synoptic History	Some advocated Passover observance in 1872, 1884, 1885 in articles in

<sup>8</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>9</sup> Although not advocating holy day observance, in an article *The Midnight Cry* by Samuel S. Snow, he wrote that the Feast of Tabernacles was "a type of the marriage supper of the Lamb; which will be celebrated in the New Jerusalem, the tabernacle of God which is to be with men". (Vol. 1, No. 1, 22 August 1844, p. 4)

<sup>10</sup> "26 religious organizations, most with no WCG links, teach WCG-like doctrines" *The Journal*, Issue 26.

<sup>11</sup> See also O.R.L. Crozier, "The Sanctuary. Part One of Four. The Law of Moses," *Day-Star, Extra*, 7 Feb 1846. His views on the Azazel goat typology was accepted by the Sabbatarian Adventists, later the Seventh-day Adventists and Church of God, though with variation in interpretation. In his article, Crozier stated: "ignorance of the law and its meaning is the only possible origin that can be assigned for the opinion that the scapegoat was a type of Christ" and he set out 8 reasons for identifying Satan with the Azazel goat.

<sup>12</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. Following this he writes:

"But in 1872, Samuel Davidson wrote to *The Hope* [ie *The Hope of Israel* periodical] 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).

Nineteenth Century		
	of the Churches of God in the Latter Days," <i>Facts of Our Faith</i> , p. 18 <sup>13</sup>	Church periodicals. As such it is obvious that some observed the Passover in the late 1800s <sup>14</sup>
Cochranites	Refer to references in the footnotes <sup>15</sup>	Early nineteenth century

"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. 182-83)

"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>13</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>14</sup> *The Hope of Israel*, 16 July 1867, pp.22-23 (by T Hamilton):

An article appeared in *The Hope of Israel*, "What kind of Wine did our Savior use when he instituted the Lord's Supper?" which indicates that they were debating how to observe the Passover at that time. Richard Nickels discusses the Passover observance in the late 1800s on pages 135-137 of *History of the Seventh Day Church of God*.

<sup>15</sup> Jacob Cochran, the leader of a strange sect known as the *Cochranites* advocated the observance of the Passover (at least in some way) in the early nineteenth century. This shows that the idea of the Passover and holy days was circulating in some limited fashion at the time.

### Nineteenth Century

Israelite Church of God	<i>The Church of God from Judea to Chile</i> , chapters VI and VII <sup>16</sup>	Observed the Feast of Tabernacles since the late 1800s
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>17</sup>	A Mormon offshoot, advocated the Sabbath and feast days since 1848-50
Russellites	Charles Taze Russell and George Storrs observed 14 Abib Passover	These were not Sabbatarians, but held to a number of truths

### Twentieth Century

Greenberry G Rupert's Church group (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>18</sup>	His church group was established around 1902/03
Seventh-day Adventist groups and individuals	International Bible School Association, <i>General Conference Bulletin</i> , Vol. 4, 19 April 1901, pp. 352-53 <sup>19</sup>	

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The *New Bedford Mercury*, 15 August 1823 also makes mention of this: Passover observance by a church at Kennebeck which "must have been something like a "reformed" Cochranite/Quaker society."

Thanks to Dr James Arnold for bringing this to my attention in February 2025.

1800's *New England Sects*, 31 July 2006 (<https://olivercowdery.com/gathering/JCochran.htm>)

You can read more about Jacob Cochrane at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacob\\_Cochran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacob_Cochran)

<sup>16</sup> Ricardo Lopez Marchant, *The Church of God from Judea to Chile*, chapters VI and VII.

<sup>17</sup> "James Strang and the Sabbath-keeping Mormons," *The Sabbath Sentinel*, Sept-Oct, 1999.

<sup>18</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>19</sup> The article that contains this information is International Bible School Association, *General Conference Bulletin*, Vol. 4, 19 April, pp. 352-53. The meeting was chaired by M.C. Wilcox.

Twentieth Century		
General Conference of the Church of God	<i>The Journey</i> , p. 183 <sup>20</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
Church of God, Arran Island, Scotland	John Morgan interview with Margaret McKormack <sup>21</sup>	Observed all holy days
English sabbatarians in early 1900s	"Deaconess baptised in 1918, Evicted by Sunday Worshipers", <i>Worldwide News</i> <sup>22</sup>	Observed all holy days
Church of God	<i>The Bible Advocate</i> (1907) <sup>23</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>24</sup>	Observed all holy days

<sup>20</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>21</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>22</sup> "Deaconess baptised in 1918, Evicted by Sunday Worshipers," *Worldwide News*, 4 March 1985, by Jeff Zhorne.

<sup>23</sup> Letter in the *Bible Advocate* from Sister Katie R Gillstrap advocating the observation of the Days of Unleavened Bread (p. 251).

<sup>24</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

Twentieth Century		
The Gilstraps	<i>History of the Seventh Day Church of God</i> by Richard Nickels <sup>25</sup>	Observed these days for decades and may have influenced Herbert W Armstrong to observe them?

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 Believe 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 latter through elder Herbert W. Armstrong who again 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>25</sup> Here is the information on the Gilstraps:

"In 1907, a letter in the Advocate from Sister Katie R. Gilstrap reveals that she and her husband were Seventh-Day Adventists, but came into Church of God beliefs because Seventh-Day Adventists would not accept the Passover. She wishes "Brother [J.H.] Nichols" could visit them, as they live in an isolated place and have no contact with Church of God brethren. Mrs. Gilstrap noted that Advocate readers would probably not see the need of still keeping the seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread with the two Sabbaths (March 31 and April 6 of that year, as she calculated, which is a day ahead), but she and her husband believed Christ and the disciples kept them, and we should too, referring to Acts 12:3 and 20:6. Mrs. Gilstrap was pleased to see from the last copy of the Advocate that the Church of God people would keep the Passover of 1907 on the "correct" time, on the 15th night. She notes that they formerly kept Passover on the night of the 14th, and is happy to see a church not bound up in a creed that doesn't turn from past errors. The Gilstraps had kept the Passover since 1893, but knew of no one else who kept it at the time they did. Subsequently, Brother Nichols, De Ford and a Dr. Reed took up this truth, De Ford wrote it in Azazel, Dr. Reed in Gleanings, and both later in the Advocate [footnote 153 - *Advocate*, April 4, 1907, p. 251].

The Advocate of that same year also carried a letter of an Elder Richardson of London supporting observance of Passover on the night of the 14th, March 28 of that year. J.F. Flory of Lemoore, California kept the Passover with ten others at his house. First they had a supper, then washed each other's feet, had the bread and cup, and sang an hymn." [footnote 154 - *Advocate*, April 16, 1907, p. 259] (*History of the Seventh Day Church of God*, chapter 9).

## Twentieth Century

Church of God in  
general

Clarence O Dodd (from 1928)<sup>26</sup> and several other Church of God groups<sup>27</sup> including the Seventh Day Church of God (Caldwell, Idaho)<sup>28</sup> and the famous John Kiesz.<sup>29</sup>

One wonders if the Gilstraps had any relationship to Greenberry G Rupert? Did they have any influence in convincing Herbert Armstrong to observe these days given that they had observed these days since 1893. J. G Gilstrap became a Church of God minister and remained so into the 1920s. In fact Katie Gilstrap wrote an article on the spring holy days and their relationship to Christ's crucifixion and she and Mr Armstrong corresponded about the Passover vs Lord's Supper issue (Mr Armstrong's letter to Katie Gilstrap, *HWAP Collection*). This led him to look further into the issue and may well have led him to look into and subsequently observe all the holy days.

Katie Gilstrap wrote at least one article discussing how the spring Holy Days meshed with the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Herbert Armstrong's 1928 letter to Katie was in response to that article. Perhaps as a result of her influence, Herbert Armstrong started in the spring of 1928 an intense personal Bible study of the Holy Days. The record of this study has been preserved in his personal papers. His study apparently led him to start observing Unleavened Bread by the spring of 1929.

<sup>26</sup> According to Richard Nickels

"Clarence O. Dodd states that **he began to keep the Passover in 1928, and immediately began keeping the other Feast Days of the year**. "After being thwarted in a determined effort to teach the importance of keeping these Holy Days in the group in which he was then affiliated," Elder Dodd "broke away and inaugurated a magazine to proclaim the importance of this great Truth."

Dodd had been instrumental along with A.N. Dugger during the 1933 Church of God, Seventh Day split, helping to form the Salem, West Virginia faction. He served as Secretary-Treasurer through the spring of 1939. When the church reacted strongly in opposition to his Feast Day teaching and asked him to resign, Elder Dodd began a new magazine in March, 1937, in order to continue to teach the keeping of the Feast Days." (*Origin and History of the Sacred Name Movement*, p. 1)

<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately, some rather strange groups observe the feast days, such as World Mission Society Church of God. You can read their beliefs here <https://watvwelcome.org/en/truth/>

<sup>28</sup> The Seventh Day Church of God based at Caldwell, Idaho has been observing the Holy Days since the 1930s and split from the 'back to Salem' group (that is my understanding) and formed a separate group around 1950. It reiterates Holy Day observance in their booklet *Doctrinal Points. The Church of God*, p. 3).

<sup>29</sup> Kiesz mentions his observance of the holy days together with Herbert Armstrong in his article *Information on Herbert W Armstrong*: "It was in the fall of 1937 when Elder Armstrong's credentials were revoked by the Salem Church of God organization. The reason given by the Board of Twelve for this action was because he taught and kept the annual Feast days ... Sister Kiesz and I assisted in the Feast of Tabernacles at Eugene, Oregon, in 1941, and again in 1944, and the last one I attended by myself at Belknap Springs, sixty miles east of Eugene, 1945. We lived in Canon City, Colorado, most of the time from 1940 to 1950. It was during part of January and part of February, 1945, that Herbert held us a fairly successful evangelistic campaign in Canon City ...

In his booklet *History of the Church of God (7<sup>th</sup> Day)* he makes mention of the holy days: Year 1934 - "there was a wonderful campmeeting held in Salem during the time of the Feast of Pentecost, and another one at St. Joseph, Missouri in the fall of during the Feast of Tabernacles. Many new and independent Sabbath-keepers were added to the fold for the next several years, but troubles soon arose." (p. 88)

Year 1935 - "there was a blessed and success-ful campmeetng held at Jefferson, Oregon; and the fall campmeeting was held during the time of the Feast of Tabernacles at Galena, Kansas." (p. 88)

Presumably Kiesz continued to observe these days privately, even though he was a Church of God (seventh day) member, which did not sanction them, but permitted observance by members.

Twentieth Century		
Various others	Messianics, some Seventh-day Adventists, some Seventh Day Baptists and even some mainstream Baptists etc <sup>30</sup>	Observed all holy days

## Concluding Remarks

Perhaps Ralph Orr also does not understand the gradual revival or the Church and its consequent Work in the end times. This includes restoration of diminished knowledge. Notice Daniel's prophecy:

“But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, **and knowledge shall increase.**”  
(Dan 12:4, ESV)

For the historical use of the term Lord's Supper, refer to the **Appendix. Herbert W Armstrong and the term 'Lord's Supper'**.

Finally of all, let the reader be aware that what they have been reading are 'notes', not a technical paper as such. It is a gathering and assemblage of data which is pre-paper or ore-article in its formation.

Converting it to a full-blown explanatory paper is the next step and for another time, as this author can find the time.

It is hoped that enough data has been gathered and presented to assert, at least to some degree, that the Passover was observed by Sabbatarians prior to the twentieth century.

## Appendix. Extracts from 2 books by Richard Nickels

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<sup>30</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 world-wide 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]**



NB: The reader can find Nickels' books online here:

[https://www.friendsofsabbath.org/iframe/ABC/Pioneers&Researchers/Richard\\_C\\_Nickels/richard\\_c\\_nickels.html](https://www.friendsofsabbath.org/iframe/ABC/Pioneers&Researchers/Richard_C_Nickels/richard_c_nickels.html)

**Below extracted from *History of the Seventh Day Church of God*:**

“(4) As for the proper time for celebrating the "Lord's Supper," the first definite report of a yearly Passover in Marion was in 1899.

According to Cramer in 1870, the Marion Church adopted foot washing and the Lord's Supper at least once in three months. But in April 23, 1867 issue of the Hope of Israel appeared an article by Samuel Cronic, Mt. Carroll, Ill., contending that the early church, to the time of Constantine, observed the Lord's Supper annually at the beginning of the 14th of Abib, and then we should now show His death until He comes, by also observing it at the beginning of the 14th. Certainly this is a strong indication that some of the Church of God people observed the annual Passover.”

Various Adventists apparently came independently to the observance of the Sabbath and/or Passover. In 1875, J.L. Boyd of Philadelphia wrote the Church of God paper, reporting that he and a group of about 175 Philadelphia Adventists learned to practice the Sabbath and the "feet-washing" accompanying the yearly recognition of the Lord's Supper. This practice began in 1845, the year following the Great Disappointment.

(5) Also in 1867, appeared an article by Thomas Hamilton stating that fermented wine is to be used in the Lord's Supper, since it was used in the drink offerings of the Old Testament, and also at the Passover. But another article refuted this.” (p. 41)

“The April 12, 1881 issue of the Advocate sets forth reasons for observing the Lord's Supper, or Passover, annually at the time of the Jewish Passover. Pro and con articles were printed on the subject, but Passover reports in the spring of that year showed that many brethren had accepted it. A group in Nebraska at Samuel Barackman's kept the Passover and footwashing on the evening after the 13th of Nisan, as did R.E. Caviness of Beckwith, Iowa, and a "Brother Davison." The May 24, 1881 issue of the Advocate contains a long article by A. F. Dugger explaining the reasons for annual observance.” (p. 47)

“Dugger, in his History of the True Church, refers to a Church of God established in Wilbur, West Virginia in 1859, by Elder J. W. Niles, who came from Erie, Pennsylvania. Derisively called "Nilesites" by their enemies, this group was said to have kept the Passover on the 14th of Nisan.” (p. 59)

“On Thursday evening, March 30, 1923 (the beginning of Nisan 14), many of the churches in the Church of God Conference reported that they observed the Passover. Although probably not all the churches sent in Passover Reports, those that did give a picture of the extent of the Church of God at this time.” (p. 98)

Further Passover reports in 1924 (p. 102)

“When the 1928 Passover date was announced, It was advised that to prepare for the event, Church of God members meet every night for a week previous,

so "that there may be a general season of refreshing, a time of forgiveness and settling of differences should there be any, and a refilling of the Holy Spirit." (p. 120)

#### "Passover Question

One of the Issues that was to prove critical in the 1933 division of the Church of God was the date of the Lord's Supper, or Passover.

The April 12, 1881 Hope set forth reasons for observing the ordinance annually at the time of the Passover. Pro and con articles followed, but Passover reports in the spring of 1881 showed that many brethren had accepted it. The April 26, 1881 issue states that the Passover was kept on the evening after the 13th of Nisan, with footwashing, at Bro. Samuel Barackman's in Nebraska. Also, R.E. Caviness of Beckwith, Iowa reported observing it, and Bro. S.S. Davison spoke in favor of an annual Passover. The May 24, 1881 issue contained a long article by A. F. Dugger explaining reasons for annual Passover observance.

In 1907, a letter in the Advocate from Sister Katie R. Gilstrap<sup>31</sup> reveals that she and her husband were Seventh Day Adventists, but came into Church of God beliefs because Seventh Day Adventists would not accept the Passover. She wishes "Brother [J.H. ] Nichols" could visit them, as they live in an isolated place and have no contact with Church of God brethren. Mrs. Gilstrap noted that Advocate readers would probably not see the need of still keeping the seven days feast of unleavened bread with the two Sabbaths (March 31 and April 6 of that year, as she calculated, which is a day ahead), but she and her husband believed Christ and the disciples kept them, and we should too; referring to Acts 12:3 and 20:6. Mrs. Gilstrap was pleased to see from the last copy of the Advocate that the Church of God people would keep the Passover of 1907 on the "correct" time, on the 15th night. She notes that they formerly kept Passover on the night of the 14th, and is happy to see a church not bound up in a creed that doesn't turn from past errors. The Gilstraps had kept the Passover since 1893, but knew of no one else who kept it at the time they did. Subsequently, Bro. Nichols, De Ford and a Dr. Reed took up this truth, De Ford wrote it in Azazel, Dr. Reed in Gleanings, and both later in the Advocate.

Yet the Advocate of that same year also carried a letter of an Elder Richardson of London supporting observance of Passover on the night of the 14th, March 28 of that year. J. F. Flory of Lemoore, California kept the Passover with ten others at his house. First they had a supper, then washed each other's feet, had the bread and cup, and sang an hymn.

#### Two Dates Kept — 1908

Elder R.E. Caviness celebrated the Passover at Pleasant Plain, Iowa, with the Cramers and several others on the evening of the 14th, with feet washing afterwards. But at the Pleasant Hill, Missouri church, they celebrated it on Nisan 15, Bro. G. W. Richards officiating. And again, the Scranton, Iowa, church kept it on the 14th.

**Further Date Controversy** In 1909, the correct date of Passover (Nisan 14) was April 5 (observed the evening of April 4).

Yet in the 1909 Advocate is mention that Passover is to be observed on Monday night, April 5, and in so doing that this fulfilled keeping the Passover on the

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<sup>31</sup> Details in the References.

14th of Nisan. But the Church of God at Glen, Colorado, observed Passover on the evening of April 3, or the evening of April 2. The Stanberry church met for the Passover the night after Sabbath, April 3. It is obvious that there was one or two days variance in Passover observance.

In 1910 the dispute was still on. S.W. Mentzer computed Passover as the evening after Sabbath, which fell on April 23. Nisan 14 that year was April 23. J. Nuesch refuted Mentzer, saying that the Pass over lamb was slain until the evening of the 14th, not until the 15th. J.G. Gilstrap disputed Nuesch, saying Passover should be observed that year Sunday evening April 24.

In 1917, the Advocate contained reference to observing Passover the beginning of the 14th of Nisan, which fell on that year on Friday April 6. Thus the observance was on Thursday evening, April 5.

In 1924, the term "Lord's Supper" appears to be used generally for the first time instead of "Passover." It was observed (correctly) on Thursday evening, April 17. A lead article in the April 8 issue is entitled, "Why Unfermented Wine Is Used at the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper," and written by Evelyn L. Long. The article stated that Jews used unfermented wine, Christ did, so we ought to also. The Church of God was listed as observing "the Passover or Lord's Supper" at the beginning of the 14th. Christ was killed between three and five o'clock in the afternoon of the 14th, the same time as when the Passover lamb was killed. This implied that the true Jewish Passover was on Nisan 15.

Regardless, 1924 was the first time generally that "Passover reports" of the churches were given, indicating the location of various churches keeping the Passover. In 1926, there was a report of when the Millyard Church of God in London observed the Passover. It was correct, on Sunday evening, March 28, the beginning of the 29th. The Advocate noted that this was the same time calculated by the Church of God.

#### Passover — 14th or 15th of Nisan?

One of the key issues mentioned as the cause of the 1933 Church of God division was the issue of when to observe the Passover. Dugger leaned to observance on the beginning of the 14th, and this was adopted as the official church doctrine. But there was opposition. The Stanberry group (as opposed to the Salem group) leaned toward the 15th date. In a 1937 Bible Advocate of the Stanberry group, Darrell A. Davis wrote an article, "True Christian Observance of the Lord's Supper." He said that the wine should be grape juice, the footwashing before the ordinances, and the hymn should be afterwards, without a closing benediction. The leftover bread should be burnt, and leftover wine poured out. Interestingly enough, the paper listed two "Lord's Supper dates".

#### Custom of Fasting Before

Passover From time to time it has been noted that the Church of God advised a period of fasting prior to Passover observance in order to properly prepare for the important event. In 1924, the General Conference committee set aside a week of fasting and prayer to precede Passover of that year. It was not recommended that everyone fast an entire week, but each member was to use his own judgment. In 1925 again it was recommended a week prior to Passover, to get member's minds on the sacredness of the event.

#### Feast Days: Sleeper Issue

A more quiet issue, alluded to earlier by Mrs. J. G. Gilstrap, was that of whether or not the feast days should be observed. The discussion of the Sabbath

question naturally raises to the fore the question of the validity of the annual sabbaths, or holy days of Leviticus 23. The same arguments used against Sabbath observance are used against feast day observance.

James White had early rejected the feast days. (See the first issue of *The Present Truth* in 1849.) Seventh Day Adventist J.N. Andrews refuted the feast days in his work in 1873. He said, "There is no evidence that the jubilee was ever observed, and it is certain that the sabbatical year was almost entirely disregarded. Lev. 26:34, 35,43 and II Chron. 36:21. "Pentecost nor the Feast of Tabernacles could not have been observed until after the Hebrews entered Palestine, and "The annual sabbaths were part and parcel of these feasts, and could have no existence until after the feasts to which they belonged had been instituted." Isa. 1:13,14 shows that God hates "your new moons and your appointed feasts," while Hos. 2:11 shows God will cause to cease "her feast-days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts." Christ abolished them completely, according to Andrews.

#### Some Church of God Supporters Held to Feast Day Observance

In May, June and July of 1913, issues of the *Bible Advocate* carried articles supporting the observance of feast days. They were written by G. G. Rupert, later the publisher of the paper, *The Remnant of Israel* (1915-7), a former Seventh Day Adventist. Rupert's starting premise was that "there is not a single text in the New Testament that teaches that any law that God ever gave was abolished and nailed to the cross...." and that only the sacrifices and oblations have ceased, as stated in Daniel 9:27. Rupert was an independent who for a time went along with the Church of God from Stanberry, but because they refused to accept his teachings, formed an independent movement.

#### 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. Dagger, included a caption stating that "Every writer is held responsible for their sentiments."

#### Official Church of God Position Against Holy Days

The 1917 article, "What the Church of God Believes and Why?", written by A.N. Dagger, stated in Article 21 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 Eph. 2:15, Heb. 9:10-12. In the same issue, in the "Question Corner" section, Dugger explained Rom. 14:15 as follows:

"The death of Christ made an end to the feast days, and meats and drinks, which were shadows. Those who rejected Christ were still keeping these feast day Sabbaths...." and Paul gave them contrary instruction, Col. 2:16.

Another "Question Corner" answer by Dugger in 1924 stated that Acts 18:21 refers to the feast of Passover day, and Acts 20:3 (days of unleavened bread) refers only to the Passover, not the whole week.

Holy Days were to be a 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." (pp. 134-39)

“The church was in a crisis that split it right down the middle. On the one side, Andrew N. Dagger and others held to "reorganization," of church government, clean meats, no tobacco, and Passover on Nisan 14. On the other hand, Burt F. Marrs led a group of "independents" that were pro-pork and tobacco, and felt Passover should be on Nisan 15. The issue of when to observe the Passover was debated for three days during the time of the division. Possibly the issues were not this clear-cut. The real gut issue, as stated by R. A. Barnes, was not doctrine at all, but "who's going to drive the car", that is, whose policies would govern the church.” (p. 151)

**Below extracted from *Six Papers on the History of the Church of God*:**

“One of these Sabbath-keeping Adventists was William E. Arnold of Rochester, New York. In 1844 he stated his Sabbath convictions to Elder Joseph Marsh, who thereupon studied the question but rejected the Sabbath as “Jewish.”<sup>2</sup> This Sabbath-keeping Arnold may have been the same Arnold who at Volney, New York, in August of 1848, disputed with Mrs. White and held to Passover observance once a year.” (“The Adventist Movement: Its Relationship to the Seventh Day Church of God,” *Six Papers on the History of the Church of God*, ch. 3).

## **Appendix. Herbert W Armstrong and the term ‘the Lord’s Supper’**

In the Church of God community, the term *Lord’s Supper* is used in various ways, such as:

- It is interchangeable with Passover (14 Abib).
- The original Passover was 15 Abib and the same as Night to be Much Observed. But the Lord’s Supper and New Covenant Passover is on 14 Abib (this means they keep it on the same day as the above).
- The original and New Testament Passovers are on 15 Abib.
- Etc.

Notice that it was in 1845 that a small sabbatarian group based in Philadelphia, led by J. L. Boyd and C. S. Minor, celebrated an annual "Passover," which was a meal of bread and grape juice to remember Jesus' death.

"They also washed one another's feet, following Jesus' Passover example. They continued this practice alone for 30 years before they ever found any others who agreed with them." (Ralph Orr, "Has God's Church Always Kept the Passover?" *Reviews You Can Use*, March-April, 1993, p. 32).

The Church of God also observed the Passover and Herbert Armstrong discovered them and this doctrine in the 1920s per the information outlined in his *Autobiography*.

Of interest is the letter that Mr Armstrong wrote to Katie Gilstrap:

"Christ abrogated this Passover entirely, instituting in its stead a new ordinance, called the Lord's Supper.... The Lord's Supper is the true scriptural name and title for the ordinance. Read I Corinthians 11:20-34. The name Passover is not used in the New Testament at any time, as the name of this ordinance under the New Testament, after the crucifixion. It is improper for us, then, to call it the Passover." (Herbert Armstrong, *Letter to Katie Gilstrap*, 3 May 1928)

Since 1893, the Gilstraps had observed Unleavened Bread and Passover and wrote about it. That prompted Herbert Armstrong to write Katie a letter in 1928. Herbert Armstrong began a rigorous personal Bible study of the Holy Days in the spring of 1928, maybe as a result of her influence. His personal documents contain the documentation of this investigation (many which I have). By the spring of 1929, he had obviously begun to observe Unleavened Bread as a result of his study.

Yet in reading further on this, he came to accept the proper name of Passover by the late 1930s (though Lord's Supper was sometimes used interchangeably).

From the sources below, it can be seen that Mr Armstrong used the term interchangeably with *Passover* until at least 1974 from what can be ascertained [emphasis mine throughout this appendix].

"The most solemn and sacred occasion of the year, the observance of **the Lord's Supper**, will take place on Tuesday night, April 16th. This is the eve, or beginning of Abib 14th of the sacred calendar, which is April 17th.

Jeans, Alvadore, and Eugene churches will combine for the occasion, meeting at the home of the editor in Eugene, at 560 Fourth Avenue, West. The editor will officiate, assisted by the deacons, E. E. Fisher, and W. M. Conn.

Elder Ray will officiate at Oregon City, Elder Stewart at Salem, and Elder Severson at Harrisburg. We are unable to announce the places of meeting in these cities, but the brethren at each place will probably know, or can learn, where to go.

Let all the brethren examine themselves, being sure that none partake of this sacred ordinance unworthily. If any feels unworthy, the Word does not excuse him from taking the supper, but rather: "Let a man EXAMINE himself, and so let him EAT of that bread, and DRINK of that cup." All are COMMANDED to observe it. Let us seek the Lord very earnestly." ("The Lord's Supper and Days of Unleavened Bread are Here!" *The Bulletin of the Churches of God in*

Oregon, March 1935, p. 1)

"The **LORD'S SUPPER, or PASSOVER** will be observed this year on Thursday night, April 6th, after sundown. April 7th is the "PREPARATION". This date, sunset April 6th until sunset April 7th, 1944, is Abib 14th, sacred calendar." ("Dates of Holy Days, 1944," *The Good News Letter*, 20 March, 1944, p. 1)

"GREETINGS! Once again I'm writing you on the train. Mrs. Armstrong and I are returning to Pasadena from Gladewater, near Longview, Texas. There we met for **the Passover (Lord's Supper)** and first annual Holy Day of the Eternal our God in a wonderful conclave of co-workers and brethren brought into God's Truth and the Body of Christ thru this great work." (*Coworker Letter*, 17 April 1952, p. 1)

"However, I did want to visit our office in Jerusalem, established just before the war. And I had the experience of partaking of **the Passover -- "Lord's Supper"** -- as Jesus introduced it for the New Testament, commemorating His death for us, on the very anniversary of that event, IN JERUSALEM, and in our own office-residence there!" (*Coworker Letter*, 28 April 1968, p. 1)

"In Matthew's account, we read, "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread" (Matt. 26:26). It was "as they were eating" that He took bread **and introduced this solemn ordinance we call the Lord's supper. Eating what? Eating the Passover!** (Verse 17, and Luke 22:15.)" (Herbert W Armstrong, *How Often Should We Partake of the Lord's Supper?* 1952, 1974, p. 6)

"**The "Lord's supper" or New Testament Passover** should be observed after sunset on the evening before the Jewish people of today celebrate their feast." (ibid, p. 12)

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## ***Notes on the History of Passover Observance***

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