

When called upon to explain how Church of God beliefs differ from main stream belief systems, a regard for ‘the Sabbath and Holydays’ is often denoted as prime example. With most, this can be a conversation ender. They may mean a lot to those who are aware of their historic and prophetic relevance, but the general religious public usually sees these as archaic and downright irrelevant in this ‘evangelical’ age.

Perhaps it would be more effective to lead off with more relevant differences, such as the issues: mis-defined grace and the immortal soul. These differences have sound Biblical back-up and move straight to the **heart of the essential distinctions** between Biblical teachings and the errors of apostate Christianity.

The popular religions embrace a mis-defined “**grace**” that justifies and even legitimizes disobedience. Paul saw that tendency even in his own time, and specifically forbade that we think such a perverse thing. No matter! It’s so bad in some quarters, that many see ‘obedience’ to anything Biblical (especially Old Testament) as an offence against the auspices of grace, interpreting any apparent compliance with Biblical instruction and example as ‘**legalism**’, not realizing what the term really means, let alone that it isn’t used in the New Testament! Taken to the logical extreme, such reasoning makes obedience a virtual SIN, as it (in their view) expresses a certain degree of contempt for ‘the Grace of God’! Can we see the challenge? Ephesians 2:10 (a verse modern religion usually disregards) sets a correct final trajectory on the defective idea developed from the oft-quoted verses 8 & 9, typically used to launch toward a wrong conclusion.

The most prevalent idea of ‘**Going to Heaven**’ is another major distinction with potent leads-into further conversation, should the hearer be remotely interested in further pursuit. The Bible doesn’t mention going to heaven, and in fact, reveals much to the contrary. The early Church set their hope firmly in a **resurrection!** But one needn’t be resurrected in order to go to heaven as taught by modern religion. Following this issue thru to its logical destination, there’s an opening to also undercut the non-Biblical (but common in ancient pagan religions) idea of the ‘immortal soul’. It is Biblically evident that God has a **better plan** than religionists envision, in the **Millennial Kingdom of God** on Earth, which involves resurrections (more than one) and a visible return of Christ to take power over the nations. Thus it’s also evident that there is no ‘end of the world’ as mankind usually expects, but rather, a **new age**, under the administration of Christ and His Saints. Not your typical picture of things! God’s Plan also addresses the enigmatic question of what happens to those who died not having had a real opportunity for salvation!

IF considering the Sabbath and Holydays as differences, we should note potent historical references. For example, the New Testament Church **was Sabbatarian** well into the fourth century. This is a clear fact found in the historical record. It **kept the Passover**, as Paul also instructed the gentile Galatian Church to do, well into the early 300’s AD, a fact also well preserved in the historical record. **Pentecost**, the anniversary of the founding of the New Testament Church and of the outpouring of God’s Spirit, was a long-established Old Testament Holyday, strictly determined from within the several interdependent Holydays associated with the first annual harvest, not the least of which being Passover, the day commemorating when the Lamb of God finalized the process of taking away the sins of the world!

Holydays are presented as **the outline for understanding end-time Bible prophecy**, carrying a greater interest factor than just a mention by themselves. Biblical Holydays frame and help place the astounding events described in the books of Daniel and Revelation in a light that no other lines of explanation can remotely come close to. Anyone who correctly understands end-time prophecy will immediately see the correlation! And, oh yes, the banishment of Satan from society for a thousand years should also provoke a certain degree of profound thought as to what kind of world order that will be. This being yet another anomaly that ‘doesn’t compute’ from the typically taught ‘heaven and hell’ perspective.

It is anticipated that the reader is generally aware of the many scriptures that re-enforce these basic differences, and if not, it is suggested that one review where they are to be sure our quivers are full of irrefutable and thought-provoking arrows. Our ‘differences’ are in fact profound, exciting and vital.

Fundamental Truths:

The LAW is NOT “Done Away”!

1. Think not that I am come to abolish the law: *Matthew 5:17*
2. The Law is holy, just and good: *Romans 7:12*
3. The law defines what sin is: *Romans 7:7*
4. True Faith establishes the law in our hearts and minds: *Romans 3:31, Hebrews 8:8-10.*

The ‘law of sin and death’ is immutable:

1. The wages of sin is death: *Romans 6:23, Ezekiel 18:4 & 20*
2. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission: *Hebrews 9:22*

Grace is not ‘license to continue in Sin’:

1. What, shall we sin that grace may abound? God forbid: *Romans 6:1-2 & 15*
2. We are to follow Christ’s righteous example, who did no sin: *1st Peter 2:21-23.*
3. Willful sin under grace is potentially lethal: *Hebrews 10:26-31,*
4. Being released from the death penalty creates a new obligation: *Romans 7:6*

The human ‘soul’ is not an immortal entity:

1. God only has immortality: *1st Timothy 6:16*
2. The soul that sinneth, it shall die: *Ezekiel 18:4 & 20*
3. God is capable of and will destroy both body and soul in gehenna fire: *Matthew 10:28*

Only God’s True Saints will be raised immortal:

1. We shall be changed, at the last trump: *1st Corinthians 15:51, 1st Thessalonians 4:13-17.*
2. We die corruptible, but shall be raised incorruptible: *1st Corinthians 15:42 & 50-54*
3. We must take on immortality, we aren’t born with it: *1st Corinthians 15:53*

An eternity in Heaven is NOT mankind’s destiny:

1. Christ will be present on earth with mankind during the 1000 years: *Revelation 7:15*
2. Christ will leave Heaven and dwell with and rule over all mankind: *Zechariah 14:9, Rev. 11:15.*
3. God will ultimately dwell with (Spirit born) mankind: *1st Corinthians. 15:24-28, Revelation 21:3*

Hell in the Bible is a brief gateway to extinction:

1. There is no consciousness in death: *Psalms 6:5, Ecclesiastes 9:10*
2. The wicked will be burned-up: *Revelation 14:20, Malachi 4:1*

God’s Sabbath Day is not abolished in the New Testament:

1. Sabbath-keeping remains to the people of God: *Hebrews 4:4-10*
2. It will be kept in the millennial age *Rev.14:7; Isa. 66:23*

Biblical Holydays provide understanding of Prophecy:

1. They are a shadow of things to come (an outline of future events): *Colossians 2:16-17*
2. They explain how salvation will be made available to all who have ever lived. *Heb. 6:2*

The Kingdom of God will rule the Earth for 1000+ years:

1. The Saints will co-rule with Christ: *Rev. 1:5-6, 5:10 & 20:4&6, Daniel 7:27, 2nd Timothy 2:12*
2. The Apostles will head each of Israel’s tribes: *Matthew 19:28*
3. King David will be raised to be king over the whole nation: *Ezekiel 37:24-25*

The resurrections are essential to God’s Plan for man:

1. If there is no resurrection, we are left with no hope: *1st Corinthians 15:16-19*

True conversion is thru Faith, Repentance, Baptism & the receipt of God’s Spirit:

1. If any man doesn’t have the Spirit of God, he is none of His: *Romans 8:9*
2. God can not give His Spirit to those who do not obey Him: *Romans 8:12-14*

3. Our ultimate destiny is to be born of the God Kind: *Romans 8:22-30*

The Being who became Christ is the God of the OT:

1. The “Father” was an unseen / unheard entity: *John 5:37*
2. It was Christ who gave the Law on Mt. Sinai: *1st Cor. 10:4*

There are Two Kinds of Faith :

1. That which is of ourselves: *Mk. 2:5; Mk 5:34; Lk. 7:9*
2. That which is NOT of ourselves: *Eph 2:8-10*
3. Both are required for salvation.

There will not be a pre-Advent “Second Coming”:

1. The Rapture scenario as commonly taught, is to occur at the Second Coming:
2. The First Resurrection is clearly tied to the time of Christ’s return:
3. That event begins the millennial age with Christ and His Saints ruling on Earth