

THE SACRED TIMES PRESCRIBED IN THE PENTATEUCH: OLD TESTAMENT INDICATORS OF THE EXTENT OF THEIR APPLICABILITY

Researcher: **H. Ross Cole**, Ph.D., 1996
Advisor: Richard M. Davidson, Th.D.

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the sacred times prescribed in the Pentateuch and to determine if the Old Testament itself contains indicators of the extent of their applicability. "Applicability" refers primarily to ongoing applicability throughout time. However, whether a sacred item will be universally applicable in the future may be directly related to whether it was ever meant to be universally applicable in the first place. Accordingly, this study entails a close examination of many different features of the Pentateuchal sacred times and their applicability.

Chapter 1 reviews relevant literature and describes the methodology used. On the basis of the Old Testament passages referring to these sacred times, five possible criteria are developed for establishing whether a sacred time is permanent or temporary. The first criterion concerns the canonical picture of its *terminus ad quem*, the second concerns the canonical picture of its *terminus a quo*, the third concerns the identity of those who observe it, the fourth concerns the constituent elements necessary for its observance, and the fifth concerns the interrelationship between the different sacred times.

Chapters 2 and 3, respectively, examine the relevant evidence from the Pentateuch and the rest of the Old Testament. In both chapters the general issue of ethical versus ritual law is examined before the specific issue of the Pentateuchal sacred times.

Chapter 4 concludes that the Old Testament itself indicates the permanence of the weekly Sabbath and the temporary nature of the other Pentateuchal sacred times. The implications of these conclusions are explored for biblical theology and for Jewish-Christian dialogue.

Table 1—Summary of findings

Note: Texts in bold contain evidence of the absence of limitation; those not in bold contain evidence of its presence.

Sacred Time	Criterion 2	Criterion 3	Criterion 4	Criterion 5
Sabbath	Gen 2:1-3 Exod 20:11 Exod 31:17	Exod 20:10 Exod 23:12 Deut 5:14, 15 Ezek 20:11-16 Isa 55:6, 7 Isa 66:22, 23	Gen 2:1-3 Exod 16:1, 2 Exod 31:14, 15 Lev 23:2, 3 Num 15: 32-36 Isa 56:6, 7 Ezek 20:11-16	
New Moon		Isa 66:22, 23	Num 10:10 Num 28:11-15	
Passover	Exod 12:42 Deut 16:1	Exod 12:43-49 Josh 5:1-10	Num 9:6-14 Hos 9:1-6	
Feast of Unleavened Bread	Exod 12: 14, 17 Exod 13:3 Exod 23:15 Exod 34:18 Deut 16:3		Lev 23:37 Hos 9:1-6	Deut 16:3
Festival of the Wavesheaf			Lev 23:10-14	

Feast of Weeks		Deut 16: 11, 12, 16 Deut 26:11	Lev 23:22, 37 Hos 9:1-6	Lev 23:15
Festival of Trumpets			Lev 23:37	Lev 23:23-25 Ps 81:3
Day of Atonement			Lev 16:1-34 Lev 23:28, 37 2 Kgs 8:65, 66 2 Chr 7:9, 10 Ezra 3:1-6	
Feast of Booths	Lev 23:42, 43	Lev 23:42, 43 Deut 16, 14, 16	Lev 23:37, 40 Deut 16:12-15 Hos 9:1-6	
Sabbatical Year		Exod 21:2 Deut 15:1-18	Exod 23:10, 11 Lev 25:3 Lev 26: 24, 25, 43 2 Chr 36:20, 21	
Jubilee		Lev 25:47-34	Lev 25:8-17, 23-54 Lev 27:16-24 Num 36:1-9	Lev 23:8-9