

# The Herald Of Christ's Kingdom

*January/February 2001*

## The Feasts of Israel

### In The Beginning

*Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty.—  
Deuteronomy 16:16*

Though as an agricultural country Israel's calendar was largely influenced by the progression of the crops, as a religious entity it was the sacred festivals which determined their time-keeping. Actually there were three ways to reckon the beginning of a year and the progression of months.

#### **The Calendar of Gezer**

Gezer was a small city in the southwest of the tribe of Ephraim (Joshua 16:3) where archaeologists have made extensive excavations. Among their findings was a schoolchild's copy book with the agricultural calendar of the time. This calendar offers the following progression of months (which we have coordinated with both the months of the Hebrew calendar and our modern Gregorian calendar). It is worth noting that the calendar of Gezer begins at a time that is not common to the Jewish religious nor civil years. Since the ancient months started at a new moon, this table has all months starting at the middle of one of our months to the middle of the following month.

<b>Calendar of Gezer</b>	<b>Hebrew Calendar</b>	<b>Modern Gregorian Calendar</b>
Olive Harvest	Elul	August-September
Olive Harvest	Tishri	September-October
Grain Planting	Heshvan	October-November
Grain Planting	Chisleu	November-December
Late Planting	Tebeth	December-January
Late Planting	Sebat	January-February
Hoeing Flax	Adar	February-March
Barley Harvest	Nisan	March-April
Harvest Festivity	Iyyar	April-May
Wine Tending	Sivan	May-June
Wine Tending	Tammuz	June-July
Summer Fruit	Ab	July-August

### **The Civil and Religious Years**

The civil or fiscal year in the Middle East was commonly reckoned from the autumn, usually falling in either September or October. But when Israel left Egypt in the days of the exodus, God directed his people to observe another year, a religious year, beginning in the month of the Passover, usually our March or April. The beginning of this year was determined by the new moon nearest the spring equinox.

The following chart compares the civil and religious years, with the main festivals and a scripture text referring to each of the months in the religious year. (The names of some of the months have changed, the older names appear in parentheses.)

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This issue of The Herald welcomes in the new year of 2001 by reviewing those feasts that marked the ancient calendar of Israel. These festivals not only marked historic events of religious significance, but also served as thanksgiving fetes for God's goodness to the people at harvest time.

According to the religious year, the first celebration was of Passover, a combination of two commemorations that lasted from the 14th to the 22nd of the first month. In the article The Feast of Dual Deliverance the author examines the historic nature of the salvation of both the first-born of Israel from the death angel of the last plague and the subsequent freeing of all the Jewish people from bondage. This is also connected with the harvest festival of the waving of the first sheaf of the barley crop which finds its fulfillment in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Due to the laxity of the ancient Hebrews in religious matters and the disastrous influence of idolatry, the prescribed rituals were often not observed. When a reformer came into their midst, the reinstatement of these celebrations was observed with a combination of

great joy and solemnity. One of these occasions is noted in our verse by verse study entitled The Passover of Hezekiah.

Fifty days after the offering of this sheaf came the Feast of Weeks, so named for its being just seven weeks after the Passover celebration. The treatise *When the Day of Pentecost Was Fully Come* probes the exact timing of this observance and the details of how this day marked the giving of the holy spirit to the Christian community.

These two feasts were in the spring. The Feast of Ingathering coincided with the grape vintage in the autumn. This was perhaps better known as The Feast of Tabernacles, and is discussed in detail in the article of that title.

Shortly before this feast, however, was the most solemn day of the Jewish calendar, the Day of Atonement. The function of this ritual was to cleanse the tabernacle (and later the temple) for its services for the coming year. While it was accompanied by joy for the forgiveness of sins, it was also attended with great solemnity with individual, as well as national repentance. It is these combined emotions that form the basis for the treatment of A Sabbath of Affliction.

These were the main feasts as directed by God through Moses. However, as history progressed, two other deliverances were annually commemorated by the Jews. The first of these, recorded in the book of Esther, celebrated their release from Haman the Agagite, a chief minister in the Persian government of King Xerxes. This subject, with a noteworthy twentieth-century parallel, is discussed in *The Feast of Purim and the Lot of the Jew*.

Our final article, *The Feast of Dedication*, deals with the celebration of the victory of the Maccabees over the Seleucid empire of Antiochus Epiphanes. This feast was still held annually in the days of Jesus and his words about it are recorded in John 10.

The Jewish people, throughout time, were always to remember the hand of their God in their various miraculous deliverances. Christians likewise frequently experience divine intervention on their behalf. May we each have the faith that Jehovah desired of his ancient people to appreciate and thank the Lord for his constant forgiveness and salvation.

<b>Religious Year</b>	<b>Civil Year</b>	<b>Modern Gregorian Year</b>	<b>Scriptures</b>	<b>Festivals</b>
1. Nisan (Abib)	Tishri	March-April	Leviticus 23:5,6	Passover—14 <sup>th</sup> -22 <sup>nd</sup>
2. Zif (Iyyar)	Bul	April-May	1 Kings 6:1	Second Passover <sup>1</sup> – 14 <sup>th</sup> -22 <sup>nd</sup>
3. Sivan	Chisleu	May-June	Esther 8:9	Pentecost – 6 <sup>th</sup>
4. Tammuz	Tebeth	June-July		Fast of the Fourth Month <sup>2</sup> – 17 <sup>th</sup>
5. Ab	Sebat	July-August		Fast of the Fifth Month <sup>2</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup>
6. Elul	Adar	August-September	Nehemiah 6:15	
7. Tishri (Ethanim)	Nisan	September-October	1 Kings 8:2	Trumpets (Rosh Hoshanah) – 1 <sup>st</sup> Fast of the Seventh Month <sup>2</sup> – 3 <sup>rd</sup> Atonement – 10 <sup>th</sup> Tabernacles – 15 <sup>th</sup> -21 <sup>st</sup>
8. Bul (Heshvan)	Zif	October-November	1 Kings 6:38	
9. Chisleu	Sivan	November-December	Nehemiah 1:1	Dedication – 25 <sup>th</sup>
10. Tebeth	Tammuz	December-January	Esther 2:16	Fast of the Tenth Month <sup>2</sup> – 10 <sup>th</sup>
11. Sebat.	Ab	January-February	Zechariah 1:7	
12. Adar	Elul	February-March	Esther 9:1	Purim – 14 <sup>th</sup> -15 <sup>th</sup>

## Passover

# The Feast of Dual Deliverance

*For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.—1 Corinthians 5:7*

Carl Hagensick

Passover is the oldest recorded feast still celebrated today. With more or less regularity it has been observed annually by the Jewish people for nearly 4,000 years. The celebration consisted of two parts, each commemorating a separate deliverance. The Passover ritual began with a memorial of the saving of the first-borns from the death angel. The following feast of seven days was to remember the larger deliverance of the entire nation from Egyptian bondage.

### **The Word "Passover"**

The Hebrew word *pacach* (Strong's 6452) has the primary meaning of skipping over, undoubtedly in the sense of Exodus 12:13 where God says he would "pass over" the first-born who were in the blood-marked houses so that the plague of the death of the first-born would not be over them.

Secondarily, the word referred to the entire nation "passing over" the Red Sea, where they realized their final deliverance from the forces of Pharaoh.

In still a third sense, it came to refer to the "passing over" into a new year since the original Passover coincided with the introduction of a new religious year for Israel (Exodus 12:2).

Another word, derived from this root, is *pacah*, meaning to dance, or skip like a young lamb. Certainly the deliverance from Egypt was a cause for great rejoicing and dancing (see Exodus 15). Still another derivative phrase is *assy pasahu*, meaning "to placate"; this well illustrates the placating effect of the lamb's blood sprinkled on the door posts and lintels of the houses. (See the article on "Passover" in the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia.)

## Passover Night

The Passover night was to be celebrated on the 14th of Nisan, the only nocturnal ritual of the Jews. There were eight specific commands given in Exodus 12:1-13 for the observance of this holy day:

1. The lamb was to be taken into the household four days before, on the 10th of Nisan. This found its antitypical fulfillment in the formal presentation of Jesus, the "Lamb of God," to the people of Jerusalem when he entered the city in triumph, riding on a colt, the foal of an ass.
2. The lamb was to be killed on the 14th at even (literally "between the evenings"). So Jesus was crucified on the 14th of Nisan at 3 p.m.<sup>1</sup>
3. The blood of the lamb was to be sprinkled on the door posts and lintels of the house. This showed a personal application of each individual of the blood of the lamb. As Anton Frey puts it: "Tous, this seems to say, that while all of God's providences are designed to bring us closer to deliverance from the bondage to this world, actual deliverance comes only through a coming under the blood of the Lamb. Israel itself, had to bring itself under this, the fact that the lamb had been slain was not sufficient. So, too, is it with God's antitypical Israel, it has to bring itself under the blood. Mere belief in the fact that Jesus died for the sins of the world brings no salvation, but belief that he died for me, brings with it a 'consciousness from evil,' a justification, as it were, by faith, a redemption from the curse." (Our Wilderness Wanderings, p. 2.)
4. The lamb was to be roast with fire, not eaten raw nor sodden (2 Chronicles 35:13). This differentiated this offering from Israel's other sacrifices. Benjamin Barton, commenting on this in his talk, "The Highest Motive," says: "It takes twice as hot a fire to roast anything as it does to boil it; it takes only a little over 200 degrees to boil anything, but it requires more than 400 degrees to roast. Dear friends, it seems as though that fact tells us the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ was twice as severe as the sacrifice we have to make." (Pilgrim Echoes, p. 138.)
5. The lamb was to be eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Paul identifies the bread as participation with "the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Corinthians 5:8). The bitter herbs recalled to Israel the bitter persecution which they went through in Egypt, and to the Christian the trials of the consecrated way of following in Jesus' footsteps (2 Timothy 3:12).
6. The original meal was to be eaten in haste, with staff in hand, shoes on the feet, and staff in hand. The necessity for this in Egypt was manifest, for they must be ready to leave in haste. The same applies to Christians for

none know when they will finish their earthly course and all must be in spiritual readiness for this event.

7. They were to remain in the house until morning. The lesson for the Christian is that salvation requires the staying "under the blood" all during the present dark night of sin. To remove oneself from the efficacy of Christ is to invite the fate of encountering the "angel of death."

8. The lamb was to be entirely consumed during the night, any remaining portions were to be burned. Paul, speaking of the Memorial supper which replaced the ancient Passover for the Christian, writes: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of [common participation in] the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Corinthians 10:16). Our common participation in the sufferings of Christ are confined to the same present night time. The "morning of joy" will be marked by deliverance instead of the trials of the present time.

### **The Feast of Unleavened Bread**

"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Corinthians 5:7,8).

As the solemn ritual of Passover night pictured the death of the Redeemer, so the joyous seven-day feast that followed showed the results of that death, not only as it affected the first-born, a picture of the church of Christ, but how it foreshadowed the deliverance of the entire nation (Exodus 12:17).

This feast was also called the "Feast of Unleavened Bread" (Exodus 23:15; 2 Chronicles 30:13) since only bread baked without leaven was permitted for its duration. The removal of all leaven from the house was a requirement for the celebration of the Passover season (Exodus 12:15).

Leaven, a catalyst for fermentation, was uniformly prohibited in the sacrifices of ancient Israel (Leviticus 2:11). Its use was specifically banned from being offered during the three most holy feasts of the Jews (Exodus 23:17, 18). Two exceptions to this rule were in the meal offering accompanying thank offerings (Leviticus 7:13; Amos 4:5) and in the "wave offering" on the Day of Pentecost (Leviticus 23:16,17).

Professor Lightfoot has noted that the rabbis regularly used leaven as a symbol of evil. New Testament usage bears this out (Matthew 16:6,11; Mark 8:15; 1 Corinthians 5:6-8; Galatians 5:9). Yeast, the most common leavening agent today, was not used in ancient times. The most frequent sources of leaven were obtained either by the use of a piece of fermented dough from former occasions, or by the use of honey, which was fermentable

and thus also prohibited in meal offerings (Leviticus 2:11). Unleavened bread is called the "bread of affliction" in Deuteronomy 16:3.

Jewish tradition identifies the reason for the feast being "seven days" as the time they calculated the children of Israel traveled from Egypt to their final deliverance at the Red Sea. During this time they would have no time to mix new flour and thus would have had to use the unleavened flour prepared for the beginning of the first Passover.

The only other requirement given in the Exodus account was that the first and last days of this feast be an "holy convocation." Convocations were special assemblies where all the people were to gather for special religious worship. Adam Clarke likens the Hebrew word *mikraa* here used (Strong's 4744) to the Greek *ekklesia* (Strong's 1577), which he interprets as "an assembly convened by public call." This call was originally made by the use of two silver trumpets, calling the nation to the tabernacle (Numbers 10:2,3).

The first of these Sabbaths fell on the 15th of Nisan, the night after the deliverance of the first-borns. This illustrates the deliverance of the church. The last Sabbath<sup>2</sup> was on the 22nd of Nisan, the day Jewish tradition attributes to the crossing of the Red Sea, picturing the final deliverance of all mankind at the end of the Millennial age. The Church is the *ekklesia* of God of the present time; but the mediatorial kingdom of Christ will also be a holy convocation, an *ekklesia*, or "an assembly convened by public call."

Though the first Passover was celebrated by each family group within its own home, Passovers which occurred after the entrance into the promised land were to be held only "at the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name in" (Deuteronomy 16:5-7). Eventually this place was the great temple in Jerusalem.

## **A Harvest Festival**

The Passover held yet another significance to Israel. The economy of the Middle East was agricultural. While many were shepherds or herdsmen, a large number were farmers. Olives were harvested in November and December. There were two types of figs, one in June and the other in August. Barley was the first of the grains to ripen, in March or April, with the wheat harvest following about two months later. The grape vintage was picked in September.

The three main feasts of Israel—Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles—coordinated with these harvests. The barley harvest was celebrated at the Passover time, the wheat at Pentecost, and the grape vintage at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. There is a broad consensus that the barley harvest related to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the wheat harvest to the gathering of his church, and the picking of grapes to the resurrection of mankind. It will be noted that the feasts celebrating the spiritual classes occurred in the spring, and the one relating to mankind, an earthly class, was in the autumn.

On the 16th of Nisan, the day after the first of the holy convocations or Sabbaths, a sheaf (Hebrew: omer) of the first-fruits of the barley harvest was to be waved as an offering to Jehovah (Leviticus 23:10-14). In the year of Jesus' death, 33 A.D., this day fell on Sunday, the day of his resurrection.

This offering was to be accompanied by three others: 1) a lamb without blemish of the first year (acknowledging Jesus as the Redeemer); 2) a meal offering of two omers of flour (perhaps showing Jesus' fleshly perfection, as the lamb showed his atoning sacrifice)<sup>3</sup>; 3) a drink offering (showing the co-operative offering of the individual—"For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure," 2 Timothy 4:6, NIV).

No grain was to be eaten before this first-fruit was offered (Leviticus 23:14). This would indicate that no blessings could occur from the harvest before Jesus' resurrection, represented by the waving of the barley sheaf on the 16th. Immediately following, and dating from, the waving of the barley sheaf, the countdown to Pentecost began. That day was to occur on the day after the seventh sabbath from the waving of the barley on Nisan 16.

An interesting side-note on this feast is found in Luke 6:1 where we find the beginning of the record concerning Jesus' disciples eating grain on the Sabbath. In the King James Version, the verse reads: "And it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands."

There is much debate on the phrase "second sabbath after the first." If it be authentic, which many authorities deny<sup>4</sup>, it is open to various interpretations. Some take it to refer to the second sabbath after the first of Nisan. If so, that day would precede the 16th of Nisan before which the Israelites were prohibited from eating grain. More likely, if authentic, it would refer to the second numbered sabbaths, those sabbaths in the seven that preceded Pentecost. This would place the incident of Luke 6 either 14 or 21 days after Nisan 16.

## Summary

Passover was the first and perhaps most important feast of the Jewish calendar. The following points should be noted:

1. The paschal lamb represented the sacrifice of Jesus offered, as in the type, on the 14th of Nisan.
2. The Passover supper, Israel's only nocturnal feast, signaled the deliverance of the first-borns.
3. The Passover feast during the following seven days foreshadowed the ultimate deliverance of all mankind.

4. The waving of the sheaf on the 16th of Nisan pictured the resurrection of Jesus.

5. The prohibition of eating new grain demonstrated there can be no appreciation of God's goodness until his son is raised from the dead.

6. The dating of Pentecost as being seven sabbaths after the waving of the barley sheaf illustrates the relationship that exists between the offering of the Church and that of Christ.

Even though the Christians have passed from under the commands of the law, as true followers of Jesus let us appreciate that "Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us," and let us therefore "keep the feast" in remembrance and communion with that offering.

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<sup>1</sup>. Many Bible Students identify this phrase "between the evenings" as between the going down of the sun at noon and dusk at 6 p.m. This would place the death of Christ at the same literal time of day as the slaying of the first Passover lambs. Other Bible Students use a broader definition of the term to apply to any time of the day between the onset on one evening until its close the next evening. Still others subscribe to the view described in the *Emphatic Diaglott* on page 887 of the Alphabetical Index, under the word "Evening," which reads as follows: "The Jews had two evenings. The first was also part of the day, the second was the hour or two immediately before dark. Where the word occurs in Exodus 12:6 [and] Numbers 9:3, it reads in the original 'between the evenings' and means 'twilight.' This was the time the pschal lamb was to be sacrificed.--Deuteronomy 16:6."

<sup>2</sup> Some hold the thought that the seven days of this feast represent the entire Gospel age, the individual days referring to the seven successive periods of the church depicted in Revelation, chapters 2 and 3.

<sup>3</sup>. Anton Frey in *Notes on the Tabernacle*, page 457, suggests: "As the burnt offering represents the value of Christ's work in the Father's estimation, giving 'Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor' (Ephesians 5:2), so the meat offering sets forth his perfect human character and conduct; and may be linked with his own testimony, 'My meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work' (John 4:34)."

<sup>4</sup>. The words "second" and "after the first" are of questionable authority, and though included in the majority of manuscripts, are omitted by the most reliable, including Papyrus 4 (200 AD or earlier, the Sinaitic, the Vatican 12-0, and several other good manuscripts. As Robertson notes in his *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, "It is undoubtedly spurious, though Westcott and Hort print it in the margin."

## A Foretaste of the Kingdom

# The Passover of Hezekiah

*So there was great joy in Jerusalem: for since the time of Solomon the son of David king of Israel there was not the like in Jerusalem.—2 Chronicles 30:26*

A verse by verse study in 2 Chronicles 30

Hezekiah ranks as one of the best of the kings of Judah. In fact, the Bible chronicler puts him in first place: "He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him. For he clave to the LORD, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses" (2 Kings 18:5,6).

His chief claim to fame came from the early part of his reign when he brought about great reforms, especially in attempting to rid the country of idol worship. His actions after his sickness, for which he prayed for fifteen extra years of life, were not nearly as noble.

The theme of this chapter deals with his re-institution of the Passover, which had fallen into general non-observance after the reign of Solomon approximately three centuries earlier.

### **Passover in the Second Month—Verses 1 through 4**

*And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the Passover unto the LORD God of Israel. For the king had taken counsel, and his princes, and all the congregation in Jerusalem, to keep the Passover in the second month. For they could not keep it at that time, because the priests had not sanctified themselves sufficiently, neither had the people gathered themselves together to Jerusalem. And the thing pleased the king and all the congregation.*

Immediately upon becoming king, Hezekiah commenced a great religious reform. In eight days they had re-opened the great Temple of Solomon and cleansed it of defilement (2 Chronicles 29:1-17). Hezekiah then proceeded to offer a burnt offering, which with the offerings of the people, totaled 600 oxen and 3,000 sheep. There were so many animals that the priests needed to draft the Levites to assist them in the ritual slaughter (2 Chronicles 29:33,34).

With the temple in order Hezekiah proceeded to send a message for the people to assemble to celebrate the Passover. He not only invited his compatriots of Judah, but the northern ten-tribe kingdom representatives through Ephraim and Manasseh. Hezekiah may have felt comfortable inviting his brethren of Israel since there was no king of the northern tribes at that time, Assyria having subjected them.

Since the cleansing of the temple was not completed until the sixteenth day of the first month (Nisan) and the Passover was due to be celebrated on the fourteenth, Hezekiah was faced with a dilemma. Either they have to wait nearly a full year for the next Passover or celebrate it late. This would explain why he called a council to decide the matter.

Although the Law called for Passover in the first month, the judgment of God was given that in cases of uncleanness, it would be permissible to keep the ceremony the fourteenth day of the second month (Numbers 9:6-11). The situation in Hezekiah's day was of sufficient similarity to invoke the application of that judgment.

### **The Passover Proclamation—Verses 5 through 9**

*So they established a decree to make proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba even to Dan, that they should come to keep the Passover unto the LORD God of Israel at Jerusalem: for they had not done it of a long time in such sort as it was written. So the posts went with the letters from the king and his princes throughout all Israel and Judah, and according to the commandment of the king, saying, Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and he will return to the remnant of you, that are escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assyria. And be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, which trespassed against the LORD God of their fathers, who therefore gave them up to desolation, as ye see. Now be ye not stiff-necked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the LORD, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever: and serve the LORD your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you. For if ye turn again unto the LORD, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that lead them captive, so that they shall come again into this land: for the LORD your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him.*

The proclamation was sent throughout the borders of both the northern and southern kingdoms—from Dan to Beersheba. Since the northern tribes had already been taken captive by Assyria, the proclamation was addressed to "the remnant of you, that are escaped out of the hands of the kings of Assyria." Hezekiah's breadth of mind and scope of vision for a united kingdom were not deterred by the fact that his brethren had broken away from him. His was a liberality that reached out to all regardless of the slights and hurts of past history.

However, it was not a message of forgiveness without repentance. He was not asking them to acknowledge their wrongs to their southern brethren, he was pleading with them not to turn from Jehovah as their fathers had done. The message reassured the Israelites that if they would be faithful to their part of the reform, God would be faithful in bringing them back again into one fold.

### **The Reaction—Verses 10 through 13**

*So the posts passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh even unto Zebulun: but they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them. Nevertheless divers of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem. Also in Judah the hand of God was to give them one heart to do the commandment of the king and of the princes, by the word of the LORD. And there assembled at Jerusalem much people to keep the feast of unleavened bread in the second month, a very great congregation.*

The reaction to the invitation was mixed. Evidently the majority treated the news with scorn, but some from three tribes—Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun—were humble enough to come to the feast at Jerusalem. The trans-Jordan tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh, had already passed into Assyrian captivity and the Simeonites were scattered among the cities of Judah. Thus representatives of six of the twelve tribes—Judah, Benjamin, Simeon, Levi, Naphtali, and Issachar—made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, so that a great number were on hand for the celebration of the feast.

### **Preparation for the Passover—Verses 14 through 20**

*And they arose and took away the altars that were in Jerusalem, and all the altars for incense took they away, and cast them into the brook Kidron. Then they killed the passover on the fourteenth day of the second month: and the priests and the Levites were ashamed, and sanctified themselves, and brought in the burnt offerings into the house of the LORD. And they stood in their place after their manner, according to the law of Moses the man of God: the priests sprinkled the blood, which they received of the hand of the Levites. For there were many in the congregation that were not sanctified: therefore the Levites had the charge of the killing of the passovers for every one that was not clean, to sanctify them unto the LORD. For a multitude of the people, even many of Ephraim, and Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the passover otherwise than it was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, The good LORD pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary. And the LORD hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people.*

The first act of preparation was the removal of the idolatrous altars which King Ahaz had erected in each of the four corners of Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 28:24). The stones of these demolished altars were thrown into the creek bed of the Kidron where they would be washed away by the flowing stream.

The solemnity of the ceremony was of such a nature as to cast guilt on the priests and Levites for allowing themselves to become ceremonially unclean. Before they began offering the animals of Passover, they performed their own cleansing rituals and offered

the burnt offerings prescribed by law. Thus cleansed, they performed the ceremonial sprinkling of the Passover blood.

However, many of the congregation, specifically those of the northern kingdom tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, also had not gone through the required pre-Passover cleansing. Despite this, and probably not knowing the requirements since it had been so long since the last such observance, they participated in the feast.

Again, the magnanimity of Hezekiah was shown. Rather than berating them for disobedience of the law requirements, he prayed for them, those who would prepare their hearts to seek after God. The word for pardon in this verse is the Hebrew *kophar*, meaning to cover or atone. It suggests an official removing of the guilt of the sin committed.

Here we have a beautiful picture of God's kingdom when the antitypical Passover is celebrated in the second month (celebrations in the first month show the application of the Passover to the church). Many of mankind will be unclean, not being informed before their resurrection of the divine requirements. It is for these that the mediator will step between and intercede on their behalf, that the atonement will cover the sins of all who then will apply themselves to learn and do the precepts of righteousness.

The response of God is that Jehovah will hearken to these prayers and will heal the uncleanness of all who seek to learn and do the will of God, walking humbly up to perfection on the "highway of holiness" (Isaiah 35:8-10).

### **The Feast of Unleavened Bread—Verses 21 through 27**

*And the children of Israel that were present at Jerusalem kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness: and the Levites and the priests praised the LORD day by day, singing with loud instruments unto the LORD. And Hezekiah spake comfortably unto all the Levites that taught the good knowledge of the LORD: and they did eat throughout the feast seven days, offering peace offerings, and making confession to the LORD God of their fathers. And the whole assembly took counsel to keep other seven days: and they kept other seven days with gladness. For Hezekiah king of Judah did give to the congregation a thousand bullocks and seven thousand sheep; and the princes gave to the congregation a thousand bullocks and ten thousand sheep: and a great number of priests sanctified themselves. And all the congregation of Judah, with the priests and the Levites, and all the congregation that came out of Israel, and the strangers that came out of the land of Israel, and that dwelt in Judah, rejoiced. So there was great joy in Jerusalem: for since the time of Solomon the son of David king of Israel there was not the like in Jerusalem. Then the priests the Levites arose and blessed the people: and their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to his holy dwelling place, even unto heaven.*

The account of Hezekiah's Passover illustrates one of the chief functions of all of Israel's feast days—the recognition and sorrow for individual sin. Once again, this particular

festival well illustrates Messiah's kingdom, for it will also be a time for the recognition of past sins and repentance for them—a time for the offering of peace offerings.

Though sadness for past neglect cast a pallor over the feast, it did not preclude glad songs of joy, accompanied by the temple musicians. Throughout the feast, as it will be throughout the kingdom, the spiritual Levites will teach them "the good knowledge of the Lord."

Verse 22 records that Hezekiah spoke "comfortably" to the people. This word is actually a phrase composed of two Hebrew words, *al leeb*, meaning literally, he spoke "to the heart" of the people. It is the same expression used in Isaiah 40:2 where the admonition is to "speak comfortably" to Israel. The phrase has a deeper meaning than merely comfort. It indicates that the words touched not merely the minds, but also the heart or emotions of the audience. Hezekiah, as representative of the throne of David, appears to represent Christ and his church in their future role of touching the hearts of all humanity.

As the congregation was so happy to have this feast renewed, the decision was made to continue it for another week. So restored humanity will be so pleased with the results of the Messianic kingdom they will continue the celebration by rendering continued obedience, not for another week or even another thousand years, but for eternity.

The immense size of the number of the gathered Israelites is further indicated by the number of animals that were given for the feast. The offering of the king of 1,000 bullocks and 7,000 sheep was topped by the princes (perhaps representing the ancient worthies) with their offering of 1,000 additional bullocks and 10,000 sheep.

The "great number of priests who sanctified themselves" is in addition to the ones consecrating themselves in verse 15. A text which may shed light upon this second group of priests is found in Isaiah 66:19, 20 where we read of an exodus of Jews to Israel after their final battle. Of these returnees he prophesies in Isaiah 66:21, "And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord."

A priest is one who offers sacrifices or prayers on behalf of others. In patriarchal times this was a function filled by the first-born as the heir-apparent to the headship of the family. The patriarch Job fulfills this duty for his "comforters" in Job 42:8-10. In this way many who hear the word of the Lord will assist in such Levitical offices as teaching others and in such priestly work as offering prayers (see Revelation 22:17).

It is also noteworthy that the celebrants included not only native-born Israelis but the foreigners among them. These "strangers" were not people of other nationalities who happened to be passing through, but those who had made Israel their permanent home and adopted the religion of Israel as their own. Likewise the blessings of God's kingdom apply not only to Israel but, through them, to all the families of the earth. Yet to receive of these blessings these Gentiles must not merely "pass by" but make their spiritual home in the new arrangement, adopting its laws as their own.

The joy and rededication that attended this Passover was not an end in itself, but merely a beginning in the larger reform of Hezekiah as outlined in succeeding chapters, as he sought to remove all idolatry from Israel.

Sadly, the reform was short-lived. One more attempt would be made to make it permanent. In the reign of Josiah a similar appellation was made to his great Passover: "Since the time of Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel, there was not the like in Jerusalem" (2 Chronicles 30:26). That reform also failed and it was not long before the Babylonian armies subdued the once mighty kingdom of Israel.

Nevertheless, the voice of Hezekiah's Passover, and all such attempts at future reforms, were prayers that would indeed ascend to God's holy dwelling place, "even to heaven." This is for us the great lesson of this event—to constantly invoke the memories of God's past deliverance of his people to rekindle the zeal to praise and serve him afresh.

## The Feast of Weeks

# When the Day of Pentecost Was Fully Come

*When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.—  
Acts 2:1*

Fred Binns

Even after the greater part of 2,000 years has passed into history the Pentecostal blessing is still as vital and necessary as on that first day. The outward manifestations so needed at the first may have long since vanished, but the inner working of the spirit must yet be a continuing reality for all who wish to walk with the Lord. But without the outward marking of its presence can we be sure that we are indeed walking in the spirit? All sincere followers of the Lord would undoubtedly answer, yes, and point to the many instances of the Lord's leading and overruling in their consecrated life. And well they may for the Lord is, and always has been, very gracious to his people. But over and above this, for our further blessing and instruction, the heavenly Father has left a wonderful record of the working of his spirit in the very way it must manifest its presence in his creation, in his word, and even in his peculiar people Israel. From these various arenas of unceasing activity we may, in its manner of operation, wonderfully discern further needful lessons for our spiritual growth.

The opening words of Acts chapter two is itself a case in point. We might first take note of the precise way in which the dawning of this new stage in the divine purpose is presented to us in the book of Acts. We read that it was when "the day of Pentecost was fully come" that those first members of the church were gathered.

Commentators have generally noted that these words—that Pentecost was "fully come"—calls for some kind of explanation, but generally most appear satisfied in explaining the significance of that particular day itself, or mentioning the tradition of some, that this day was also a Sabbath. We might ourselves consider the fact that, according to Jewish calculation, the day had commenced at sunset the previous evening and the coming of the morning was what was in the writer's mind. But this would be no more satisfactory an explanation than the others.

However, we do have a detail supplied by the apostle Peter (verse 15) telling us that it was the third hour of the day, which indicates the actual reason for the statement. This was the time of day, beginning with the offering of the first lamb of the "continual burnt offering," that all the offerings of Israel for that day would be made, concluding with the offering of the second lamb. For those who have entered into the reality of these offerings the appropriateness of this moment in time can not be overstated.

The lamb, the appointed symbol of the ransom, was for Israel and ourselves to be continually before us, the basis of, and the touchstone for, all other offerings illustrated in the types of Israel. The heavenly Father's beloved son had fulfilled this important type on the cross, being himself crucified between the times of the offerings of the Morning and the Evening sacrifices (Numbers 28:4).

For us the figure is the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. The reminder to both houses of Israel was that of the lamb, the blood of which first covered the first-born and in consequence made possible all the other offerings of the people. In Numbers 28 and 29 where the order of sacrificial services was described it was the first of the offerings to be detailed and as an indication of its continual efficacy its necessity was consistently reiterated with the detailing of all the other offerings. It was the efficacy of this blood that was being acknowledged at this precise time, the third hour. The day of Pentecost had fully come.

## **Two Sacrificial Lambs**

Having laid the touchstone of the ransom against our present topic it is quite remarkable how luminous this doctrine of the Pentecostal blessing is already becoming. The very fact that, in all probability, practically all the statutory sacrifices of Israel were encompassed by the two sacrificial lambs, surely instructs us that in the dispensation of the blessings of the spirit our Lord must be both "the author, and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2). Not only this but the twofold aspect of the work of the spirit is again brought to our attention in Romans 4:25 and 5:10, the apostle assuring us first, that as Christ "was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification," so "when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son," that "much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."

Having been drawn, we look at the work of the spirit in the hands of our Lord as having two essential components.

## **The Holy Spirit in the Church**

One of the essential aspects of the day of Pentecost was the offering of a firstfruit unto the Lord. It has always been understood by the Lord's people that the offering of the two cakes from the wheat harvest represented the church. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" (James 1:18).

Had Christendom but held to this important principle that this represented two steps, not one step, in the work of salvation, they could not have consigned the bulk of God's creatures to an eternal doom. A first fruit not only implies an after fruit in a harvest, it demands it! A work of the holy spirit having commenced it must be completed as we read of the heavenly Father himself: "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6). This important truth is not only confirmed by the proposed dispensational objective but

also happily promises the same blessed outcome to every individual believer: "A good work in you."

Twice the apostle Paul brings this aspect of the spirit's work clearly to our attention: "Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the spirit in our hearts" (2 Corinthians 1:22); "Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the spirit" (2 Corinthians 5:5). The Pentecostal blessing is at its inception the promise of a greater work to come both dispensationally and for an individual New Creature. If we have any doubt about this we need only listen to the apostle once again. In 2 Corinthians 1:22 he unmistakably speaks of this earnest as a seal, and reiterates this idea in Ephesians 1:13 where he writes, "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy spirit of promise." And again in Ephesians 4:30, "And grieve not the holy spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." This last statement defines quite clearly the nature of this stage of the spirit's work. This is indeed just as earnest and obviously such a "measure" as can permit us to "grieve the spirit."

This is in clear contrast to the sealing brought to our attention in Revelation 7:3,4. Here is the final sealing of the overcomers. Out of the whole Household of Faith who all undoubtedly had received the first sealing of the spirit, we have here only the final elect church, for John the revelator "heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand."

Our minds go at once to our Lord's parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins. All were virgins, therefore faithful; all had lamps, and therefore light; all had a measure of the oil, the holy spirit. The message the Lord left us with this parable is clear. Not all had the foresight to see that they needed a further supply of oil. Only the wise entered in; the others found the door firmly closed. This penetrating lesson from the master not only confirms again this feature of the work of the spirit, it also demonstrates that we have a duty to work with the Lord, not frustrate or grieve the spirit, but to work with the Lord to enter into the fullness of our Pentecostal blessing. It is this emerging aspect of the day of Pentecost that will absorb our attention as we continue our meditation.

## **The Holy Spirit In Creation**

The first work of the spirit in Scripture is in Genesis 1:2—"And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Thereafter, when God speaks, the great creative process goes forward to its conclusion in the creation of man himself. Not until then is the spirit mentioned again when we come to the close of the natural creation (see Genesis 2:7). Here we read: "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Once again, and for the second time only, the working of the spirit is mentioned; and as a completion, sealing it in fact, for we are told that after this God rested from all the works he had created.

When we examine these Scriptures carefully, we find a most powerful lesson. Over the eons of creation God, by his mighty spirit, brought into being a great multitude of creatures, all of which we are told he blessed. Then from the same dust of the earth he created man. Finally, as we have seen, the spirit moved for the second time.

During all of that time, though there were countless life-forms and countless millions of eyes, God was not seen. There were billions of ears, but the voice of God could not be comprehended. A veritable cacophony of voices filled the earth, yet not one articulated a word of praise raised to the Creator until the spirit moved again, for the second time. Then, and only then, the creation communed with its God.

We may not care to use this as a figure or type but the principle is quite striking and unmistakable. The object and, in effect, the final work of the spirit is the fullest possible communion between the heavenly Father and the work of his hands. This was the burden on our Lord's heart when with those first disciples in the upper room and on that very night he promised us the spirit. "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are" (John 17:11). And again, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:21).

Very soon, in the reality of the Feast of Ingathering, the holy spirit will continue this work (Ephesians 1:10); then Pentecostal promises close. Still "there remaineth a rest to the people of God" (Hebrews 4:9). We read in John 14:15-23, "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever. . . . He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. . . . If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Seven times that night, the blessed assurance of "in my name" was bequeathed to the church by the one who was to die for her as her ransom.

The church entered into its blessing when the day of Pentecost was truly fully come: "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you" (verse 20).

# NEWS AND VIEWS

## Pastoral Bible Institute News

### New Cover for The Herald

The look of The Herald has changed over the years, but one thing has never changed: the Table of Contents has always been on the cover. Beginning with this issue, it moves inside. Moving the Table of Contents makes it possible to display a photo that illustrates the theme of the issue. We intend to use a different photo for each issue for the foreseeable future. This will make it easy to distinguish one issue from another which is of value in display boxes and for convention tables.

### Letters

*(This letter came from an American who has lived in Israel for a number of years. We asked for her impressions of life in Israel since the outbreak of heavy fighting there.)*

Though wide-awake, Israelis are living as in an unpleasant dream. Young people take to the streets in defiance with acts of violence, while their elders attend to their duties listening intently to nearby radios or televisions giving credence to the surrealist atmosphere. The reality is: bold words and bloody, frenzied actions by Palestinians ready for battle; Israeli Arabs polarizing themselves by openly identifying with the Palestinians; Jews, politically, Right or Left, fusing under attack; and neighboring nations rushing to form alliances in preparation for a confrontation. Returning to the relative calm of pre-Rosh Hashanah seems an impossibility. Has the Lord stirred up the pot now to deter Prime Minister Barak's plans for a "cultural revolution" aimed at stripping Israel of its Jewish and Zionist content, thereby making it less "racist" to the world? It is a strong possibility!

The Lord's people occupy largely the position of spectators in respect to the course of this world, but Israel is a type and her warfare experiences against her enemies were written for our admonition. We know that God has a great surprise in mind for the land of Canaan which will not be carried out until the expulsion of these enemies, or their destruction. Having failed to obey in this regard the first time, will they heed the command now in this "faith-demanding" trial? Though some Israelis will leave (they had returned to their land, but not unto their God), those from the Diaspora, with circumcised hearts, will surely come to add their faith (of Abraham) and their strength (as of the Lord) to the cause (Hosea 6:1-3).

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

—Connie Campbell, Israel

## World News

### Religious

Fearful that years of ecumenism and church switching among baby boomers have chewed away at what makes them unique, many Protestant groups are moving to reassert their religious identities. Some congregations are casting off generic texts and hymns. Others are requiring denominational training for children for the first time in years. The United Methodist Church, the faith's main U.S. bloc, plans to launch a \$20 million media campaign, its largest such effort ever, in January 2001 to raise denominational awareness, says spokesman Steve Horswill-Johnston. The reassertion of sectarian beliefs began in the early 1990s but has lately grown stronger. Some clerics say that years of smorgasbord services have left their members feeling disconnected. Many churches hope that establishing a stronger brand identity will lure people back to the pews, says Daniel Aleshire, director of the 243-member Association of Theological Schools in the U.S. and Canada.

—Wall Street Journal, 10/24/2000

Witchcraft is enjoying a revival in the U.S. Witches' Voice, one of the oldest trade groups of sorceresses, says there are about a million witches in the U.S. and three million worldwide. Academic experts put the U.S. witch population at 500,000, but that's up roughly tenfold from a decade ago. Witches consider anyone who learns about the 13th century religion Wicca to be one of them. Most groups, called covens, practice invoking spirits and cast spells as a means of directing energy to a desired end. But the image of an evil, cackling cut-up with a wretched face is misleading, modern witches say.

—Wall Street Journal, 10/31/2000

The secretive organization behind India's ruling Bharatiya Janata party has launched a campaign to make Indian Christians cut all links to churches abroad. The move came as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) the mother organization of the Hindu revivalist party, celebrated its 75th anniversary. The RSS chief has called for the "politically motivated, anti-national activities of the foreign churches" to be replaced by a national church. The call, in a little-noticed speech, has been repeated at length in the RSS newspaper distributed to the rally. It has outraged Christian leaders.

—Financial Times, 10/16/2000

Pope John Paul tried to calm a dispute with other religious leaders following publication of a highly controversial document that rejected the concept that other religions could be equal to Roman Catholicism. Protestant and Anglican leaders, theologians and Jews reacted with dismay and disdain to the document, which was published on September 5 by the Vatican's doctrinal department, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

The 80-year-old Pope was clearly concerned about the effect the document's reception has had on inter-religious dialogue. After the Vatican's doctrinal department published the complex document, there was general concern among non-Catholic leaders that it could hurt inter-religious dialogue that has advanced greatly since the 1962-1965 Second Vatican Council. The bitterness appeared to be felt most by other Christian religions, which the document implied were second-rate because of "defects," including their refusal to recognize papal primacy. The document repeated Catholic Church teachings that non-Christians were in a "gravely deficient situation" regarding salvation.

—Reuters, 10/1/2000

## Social

A new report says nearly 40 percent of the world's land used for agriculture is "seriously degraded," which bodes ill for future productivity on that land. The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research released the report in September. It finds evidence that soil degradation has already reduced food production on about 16% of the world's cropland. In some areas, the damage is much greater. Almost 75% of farmland in Central America is seriously degraded, as is 20% of the land in Africa, the researchers say. Reasons for degradation differ by region, says Phil Padey, senior research fellow at the International Food Policy Research Institute, one of 16 research centers within the consultative group. It occurs because of erosion from flooding; chemical effects; and damage from waterlogging or compaction of soil to the point where nothing can grow. "Some combination of those effects is occurring across the globe," Padey says. The need for food is ballooning along with world population, the study notes. Currently, world cereal production is 1.8 billion tons. By 2020 the world will need 40% more. "Not all soil degradation is irreversible," Padey says.

—USA Today, 9/22/2000

Almost anywhere crops, plants or trees are expected to grow despite difficult climates or conditions, [soil specialist] Ron Helland is respected as a quasi-doctor of dirt. With 30 years of experience, this bluejean-clad crusader for a sort of practical organics travels the West Coast and Mexico, consulting on the importance of soil biology. The soil-nurturing mix produced by Helland's Biologically Integrated Organics Inc. [has] won praise from a discriminating crowd. Farmers are using it. Farmers are generally frugal. They will not spend a nickel unless it's going to benefit their crops. Helland believes the biological approach to farming will revolutionize agriculture in the next few decades—restoring land now fallow and preventing other acres from being taken out of production because of overuse and chemical abuse.

—Los Angeles Times, 11/1/2000

## Financial

The US Congress has urged the Interior Department to settle a multibillion-dollar class-action suit brought by Blackfeet Indian Tribe member Eouise Cobell in 1996 for damages arising from the government's mismanagement of the Indian trust fund. Lawyers estimate that some 500,000 Indians, most of whom live in Oklahoma and Montana, are owed anywhere from \$20 billion to \$40 billion. That would be the most the government has to pay on a claim since the \$160 billion bailout of the savings and loan industry. Indians living in reservations are supposed to be paid by the government for oil, timber, and minerals taken from their lands by private companies. Cobell, who began questioning the government's handling of the trust fund program in the 1970s, alleged that the government short-changed the Indians through gross mismanagement of the accounts. Figuring out how much the Indians are owed is a problem because 90 percent of the government's records are missing. The government destroyed many of the records while the lawsuit was in progress.

—Barron's, 10/16/2000

International bank branches in London played a keyrole in enabling former Nigerian dictator Sani Abacha to launder more than \$4 billion looted from the country during his four and a half year rule, according to investigators employed by its civilian president. The trail has led to accounts at London offices of 15 banks. General Abacha died in June 1998 and the Nigerian military regime has since been replaced by an elected government. The Nigerian government believes much more of the money plundered by the late General Abacha during his five-year rule passed through London, which still has close financial links with the former British colony.

—Financial Times, 10/20/2000

## Civil

Sudan, through which winds the mighty Nile River, is the source of a flood of some 500,000 refugees and a watershed moral decision. Africa's largest country was nominated to fill a seat on the United Nations' most powerful body, its Security Council. The council often makes some of the world's most important multinational decisions. However, Sudan lost its bid to the tiny Indian Ocean island of Mauritius after tense and extended balloting in the General Assembly. Sudan embodies every evil that the United Nations was founded to fight: war, famine, genocide, dictatorship, religious persecutions, human slavery, forced starvation and repression of women. Civil war has raged for 34 of 44 years since the end of British rule. More than 2 million people have been killed since 1983 and another 4 million made homeless. Thousands have been starved in a government-made famine. Mauritius won the necessary two-thirds only on the fourth ballot with 113 votes over Sudan's 55. The U.S. had campaigned hard against Sudan. The

council has ultimate political power in the UN system to make all major decisions concerning peace and security in the world.

—Wall Street Journal editorial, 10/10/2000

Zimbabweans protesting against rising food and fuel prices ran riot in the suburbs of the capital Harare. The rioting is the latest sign of growing discontent. The collapse of law and order has undermined President Robert Mugabe's 20 years of power. Domestic debt is rising inexorably, some state companies have failed to pay workers' salaries and the Grain Marketing Board has been unable to pay farmers for their corn. Exports of products have been disrupted by government-organized attacks on white-owned commercial farms. The government has chosen to spend what little money it has on a war in the Congo, leaving Zimbabwe so short of fuel and other imports that many companies have been forced to curtail their operations. With unemployment at more than 50 percent and inflation estimated at 70 percent, ordinary Zimbabweans find it increasingly difficult to survive.

—Financial Times, 10/17/2000

The US government, prompted by fears of bio-terrorist attack, has awarded Peptide Therapeutics, a small UK biotechnology company, a contract to produce 40 million doses of vaccine against smallpox. Babara Reynolds of the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta said, "There is increasing concern about bio-terrorism. Even though there may only be a low probability of it occurring, if it did occur it would be catastrophic." US defense officials have long feared that laboratory samples of smallpox might have fallen into the hands of potential terrorists or rogue states. Peptide Therapeutics will make a stockpile of smallpox vaccine to be used on civilians if the virus is ever released. Peptide plans to market the vaccine to other governments, including Israel.

—Financial Times, 9/21/2000

## Israel

Buried in the rubble [of the Middle East violence] was not just the peace process, it was also our dreamy view of what the world was becoming. Confronted again with pictures of flag-draped coffins and mutilated bodies, with the sounds of random gunfire and angry chants, the world had to readjust to the fact that not every problem is solvable, that the global tide of peace is not inexorable, and that progress does not inevitably make civilizations more civilized.

—Time, 10/23/2000

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat said in a speech read on his behalf on Sunday that his people would continue their Intifada, or uprising, against Israeli forces on occupied land. "Our people have proven that they are able to continue the confrontation for years," Arafat said in a speech read for him by Tayeb Abdel-Rahim, general secretary of the

Palestinian presidency. "We say to them: We are not afraid of your warnings and the blessed Intifada of our people will continue," he said. "Our people will remain steadfast until a boy or girl holds the Palestinian flag over Jerusalem, the capital of our Palestinian state," Arafat told reporters earlier after dedicating a new hospital in Gaza City.

—Reuters, 10/30/2000

Leaders of Jewish communities in America are going to bat for Israel in an effort to attain more balanced coverage of the Middle East crisis in the press generally and on television in particular. Barry Shrage, leader of a delegation from Boston's Jewish community on a two-day solidarity visit to Haifa, with which Boston has a long-standing twin-city accord, said huge resources would be needed to achieve this end. "The American Jewish community is going to have to put enormous and very serious resources into dealing with this [unbalanced coverage], but even then it is going to be extremely hard," Shrage said Sunday. "Even if the media [are] not intentionally malevolent, it is allowing the pictures to create the context—pictures of primarily Palestinians being killed—but little or no other context is being provided." Shrage is heading a nine-member delegation from Boston on what is one of the first solidarity visits to Israel by a local Jewish community. He said one of the first tasks of the delegates on their return would be to meet with the editorial boards of local and national newspapers in order to provide accurate and more detailed information about the Palestinian-initiated violence.

—Jerusalem Post 10/24/2000

Immigration to Israel is expected to stay relatively unchanged despite the current crisis, because of the impact of the recent spate of anti-Semitism attacks worldwide, Jewish Agency aliya committee chairman Aryeh Azoulay said Thursday. "We are in the heart of two conflicts, one here and one with the anti-Semitism around the world, so my feeling is that at least in the first stage, aliya will balance out," Azoulay said. Recent aliya statistics indicate that immigration has indeed remained consistent, based mainly on aliya from the former Soviet Union and Falash Mura from Ethiopia, which is not expected to be affected by the conflict here. "I don't think they watch TV in Ethiopia and anyway, compared to life there, Israel is heaven," Azoulay said. In the last week, some 1,000 immigrants arrived from the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia, compared with 140 from the rest of the world, half of which comes from France and Argentina, which both suffer from anti-Semitism.

—Jerusalem Post, 10/29/2000

## Book Review

**Pharaohs and Kings, A Biblical Quest, David M. Rohl, New York, Crown Publishers, 1995. 405 pages.**

Originally titled *A Test of Time, The Bible From Myth to History*, this book is an important piece in the development of the Bible chronology. Rohl is both an historian and Egyptologist. This presentation of his research challenges many modern skeptics' view of Old Testament history. He explores the times and environments surrounding the lives of Joseph, Moses, Joshua, David, and Solomon. He has even discovered a statue in ancient Egypt which he proposes is that of Joseph.

This research should be viewed as a valuable supplement to the chronology of volume 2 of *Studies in the Scriptures* where the period of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah are not satisfactorily reconciled. Extensive charts, pictures, and tables illustrate Rohl's discoveries and research.

While it would be difficult to read this treatise without supplemental study in the Scriptures, it provides an extremely useful exploration through many obscure passages of biblical history.

Particularly useful are the "Conclusions" that Rohl highlights throughout the book. I found it useful to first read these and then go back and develop the support. For example, one of Rohl's strong supports is for the conquest of David in 2 Samuel 5:7, "And David conquered the stronghold of Zion which is the City of David." Conclusion Seventeen (p. 227) supports this Scripture thusly: "The situation described in several of the Amarna Letters from Palestine reflects the activities of David during his seven years as king of Hebron prior to the capture of Jerusalem. The stronghold of the Habiru enemy from the mountains mentioned in the late Amarna letters EA 298, 284 and 306—there named Tianna—is to be identified with the 'fortress of Zion' (Hebrew Tsiyon) captured by David in his eighth regnal year—in other words Jerusalem.

At a time when the territory of Israel is in such dispute (Rohl has a section on the Tomb of Joseph in Egypt), *Pharaohs and Kings*, along with Thiele's *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, provide important links in the chain of history and chronology that link Israel as a rightful claimant to Canaan and the middle East.

—Len Griehs

## A Picture of the Kingdom

# The Feast of Tabernacles

*The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the LORD.—Leviticus 23:34*

David Rice

The feast of tabernacles was the last in the annual series of Israel's festivals. Its name derived from the custom of building temporary dwellings from "boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook" (Leviticus 23:40), in which they resided for the seven days of the feast. This practice was in memory of the temporary dwellings they lived in during their forty years in the wilderness. The purpose was to remind the Israelites of God's care for them then, as a stimulus to their faith and appreciation of Jehovah's concern for them in all their circumstances.

This feast was also termed the "feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labors out of the field" (Exodus 23:16), for it was also a time of thanksgiving for the bounties of their harvest just past. The Jewish agricultural year ran from Tishri to Tishri, and as this feast was in Tishri, numbered month seven counting from Nisan in the spring, it fell "in the end of the year," which is also the beginning of the next. To this day the Jewish calendar reflects the same oddity; Rosh Hashanah, the first day of the year, is day one of month seven.

## A Picture of the Kingdom

Zechariah 14 connects the feast of tabernacles with the kingdom. Verse 3 speaks of the time when "the LORD [shall] . . . fight [for Israel] as when he fought in the day of battle." The passage continues in verses 8 and 9: "In that day living waters shall go out from Jerusalem . . . and the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one." This is clearly a picture of the kingdom. Of this time, verse 16 says "the nations . . . shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles."

From this passage we conclude that the feast of tabernacles was a type whose fulfillment is during the kingdom. Concerning this feast of thanksgiving and rejoicing, three particular staples are mentioned for which Israel gave thanks: wheat, wine, and oil (Deuteronomy 11:14; 16:13). By then the wheat class (the church) will have been all gathered in and their blessed influence as the new rulers of the world will be cause for thanks and rejoicing. By then the sacrifices of the Gospel age will be complete, and the blood of atonement, represented by the wine "which cheereth God and man" (Judges 9:13), will be making reconciliation for the world. By then the work of the holy spirit will have completed the church, and the spirit will be poured out freely upon the world. The

harvest of these three products aptly represents the provisions God makes of all the necessary elements for the blessing of mankind.

The remembrance of the forty years in the wilderness, by dwelling in temporary structures, also fits this picture. The wilderness wanderings picture the Gospel age, as contrasted to the Israelites settling into the promised land which represents the kingdom. "In that day there shall be no more the Canaanite" (Zechariah 14:21), because in the kingdom the enemies of righteousness will be subdued. The feast of tabernacles, or booths, thus represents the kingdom during which mankind will look back with remembrance upon the Gospel age during which God cared for the church while she "wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way," until they receive their "city of habitation" beyond the veil in glory (Psalms 107:4, 7).

### **Passover and Tabernacles Compared**

The feast of Passover was seven days, Nisan 15 through 21. The feast of tabernacles was seven days, Tishri 15 through 21. The obvious comparison suggests some connection between the meaning of the two festivals. When we look deeper at the spring and fall festivals, the comparison is even stronger. The Passover lamb was selected on Nisan 10; the day of atonement was on Tishri 10. The 50th day celebration (Pentecost) was in the spring; the 50th year celebration (Jubilee) began in the fall.

Reprint page 3575 contains a letter to the editor from Bro. John Edgar which comments on these similar sets of observances: "Brother Hemery of London mentioned to me some time ago that he had noticed that events which occurred in the spring foreshadowed blessings for the church, while those which occurred in the autumn foreshadowed blessings for the world. This appears to me to be a natural arrangement, as spring is the beginning of the ecclesiastical year, whereas autumn is the beginning of the civil year. Applying this thought, we find that the Passover and Pentecost, etc., foreshadowed blessings for the church, whereas the Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles, and the Jubilee foreshadowed blessings for the world."

This is a fruitful suggestion. The death of the Passover lamb in the spring applies to everyone, the church and the world, but the types attending the Passover pertain more directly to the church—the firstborn—than to the world. (By comparison the Passover a month later than usual is more relevant to the world which is unclean by contact with death, the Adamic curse, or away on a journey, not close to God, Numbers 9:5-11.) The Day of Atonement in the fall focused primarily on the nation (a picture of the world), the cleansing of the priests (a picture of the church) being but a necessary step to the main purpose.

The seven days of the Passover feast represent the Gospel age feasting of the church, and indeed the church is represented in seven stages in the visions of Revelation. "We celebrate that feast antitypically, continuously feasting and rejoicing in the grace of God toward us" (Reprint, p. 2918). The seven days of the feast of tabernacles is a feast of

thanksgiving and remembrance which mankind will observe for what God did during the seven stages of the Gospel age, and it is thus fitting that it also is seven days in length.

However, there is a conspicuous difference between the two feasts. In each case the first day of the feast (day 15) was a "holy convocation" (Leviticus 23:7,35). But the seven days in the spring end with a holy convocation on day seven, whereas the seven days in the fall end with a holy convocation on day eight (verses 8, 39). Why this difference?

The seventh day of the spring feast represents the seventh stage of the church, during which the saints are completed as a body and receive their reward—a day of special rejoicing. But if the seven days of the fall festival are a remembrance of the Gospel age, the eighth day would represent the kingdom which follows which is the time of the world's deliverance. That is the day of mankind's special rejoicing.

### **Recorded Observances**

There are three observances of the feast of tabernacles mentioned in the Old Testament. Each of these is at a time which harmonizes with a picture about the kingdom.

- 1. After the dedication of Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 8:1,2; 2 Chronicles 7:8-11). Solomon's temple represents the church in its glorified condition, so its completion and dedication for use brings us to the end of the Gospel age, introducing the kingdom. So great was the festivity and rejoicing that the people feasted for 14 days, twice the normal amount.
- 2. After the walls of Jerusalem had been rebuilt in Nehemiah's day (Nehemiah 7:1; 8:14-18). The building of those walls represented the building of the walls of New Jerusalem. Revelation 21:14,17 show that the walls of New Jerusalem symbolize the church. The foundations of the wall had the names of the 12 apostles, and the measure of the wall (perhaps the height) was 144 cubits. Therefore the building of Jerusalem's walls in Nehemiah's time picture building the church "in troublous times" (Daniel 9:25), the Gospel age. This work is complete at the introduction of the kingdom, when the antitypical feast of tabernacles applies.
- 3. The third case is an observance implied at the time of Joshua. It was not directly recorded in Scripture when it occurred, but evidently carried in memory through Jewish tradition, or writings not now preserved. It was referred to many years later in Nehemiah 8:17. "And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths ... for since the days of Jeshua [sic] the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so." This also fits the pattern. Joshua represents Christ leading mankind to conquer their enemies in the kingdom. Thus an observance of the feast in Joshua's day would find a fulfillment in the kingdom.

## Offerings During the Feast of Tabernacles

Numbers 28 and 29 detail the offerings which are made during the various feasts. Chapter 28 describes the offerings for the new moons, Passover, and Pentecost, and chapter 29 describes those for the feasts of trumpets, tabernacles, and the eighth day following. Thus chapter 28 deals with the events which picture the Gospel age, and chapter 29 those which picture the kingdom. Here is a tabulation:

	Burnt Offerings			Sin Offerings
	Bullocks	Rams	Lambs	Goats
<b>New Moons</b>	2	1	7	1
<b>Passover</b>	2	1	7	1
<b>Pentecost</b>	2	1	7	1
<b>Trumpets</b>	1	1	7	1
<b>Tabernacles</b>	13 to 7	2	14	1
<b>Eighth Day</b>	1	1	7	1

Why these numbers, and these kinds, of offerings? The usual sin offering for the congregation on the day of atonement was a goat, and this never varies during these feasts. The burnt offerings probably are remembrances of the various other offerings during the year. The bullocks probably are a reminder of the sacrifice of our Lord presented at Jordan, complete at Calvary, which is the basis of redemption for all, both the church and the world. The rams remind us of the rams of consecration offered on special occasions, suggesting how all those who approach God must yield themselves in devotion to him. The seven lambs probably are a token of remembrance for the daily offering of a lamb, morning and evening, throughout the year, which represented our Lord's sacrifice as the ever-efficacious offering as the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

The burnt offerings of the seven days of the feast of tabernacles are unique in number. Excepting those for the time being, note that the bullocks offered in the spring are two in number, and later only one in number. Why this conspicuous change? During the spring festivities, which represent the Gospel age, perhaps the number is two to indicate that

during the Gospel age there are two pending benefits to be derived from our Lord's sacrifice—one for the church, another later for the world. During the fall festivities, which represent the kingdom, perhaps the number is one to indicate that during the kingdom one of these benefits has already been secured and is no longer relevant; but one application of our Lord's sacrifice remains, namely, for the world in the kingdom.

The burnt offerings during the seven days of the feast of tabernacles differ in two respects. The rams and lambs are double those offered on other occasions, perhaps to show that the feast of tabernacles was the climax, the crescendo, of the annual cycle of feasts, and indeed it represents the climax of God's divine plan when he establishes his kingdom among men. When the kingdom is twice elsewhere pictured, in the feasting at the inauguration of Solomon's temple and in the delayed Passover in the time of Hezekiah, on both occasions the feasting was twice as long as customary, 14 days rather than 7. This means of emphasizing the climax by "doubling" is consistent with the "double" offerings prescribed in Numbers 29.

The number of bullocks is clearly unique and must point to something deeper. On the first day of the feast 13 bullocks were offered, the next day 12, then 11, 10, 9, 8, and 7 on the last day. It seems our attention is forcibly directed to the symbolic meaning of the numbers as somehow pertinent to our Lord's sacrifice.

The last number, seven, is familiar enough—the perfect number which appears so often in Scripture. What of the number 13? It is the sum of seven and six, the perfect number and the imperfect number, deficient by one, and used in Revelation 13:18 in a clearly symbolic way, 666, to represent something sinful.

How could this relate in any way to our Lord? Perhaps the combination of seven and six expresses the thought of the ransom: the perfect one (seven) who took upon himself the sins of us all (six). This surmise finds a foundation in another symbolism which is clearly given in the Scripture about our Lord—the copper serpent the Israelites looked unto for the healing when bitten by serpents in the wilderness. Jesus himself applies this figure to his own offering on the cross: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up" (John 3:14).

That this serpent was made of copper shows the perfection of the man Jesus who was our ransom. That the figure was a serpent, an emblem of sin and unrighteousness, shows that the burden of our sins and imperfections was laid upon him. "He hath borne our griefs . . . bruised for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:4,5). Thus the copper serpent is an excellent representation of the ransom, and thus 13 is an excellent way of representing the same thought numerically.

The sum of all these bullocks,  $13+12+11+10+9+8+7$ , is 70. 70 is  $7 \times 10$ , combining the perfect number 7 with the earthly number 10, to represent the perfect one, Jesus, who gave his life for humanity, earthly. The same thought in only a little different form is conveyed elsewhere by the number 17,  $7+10$ . When Joseph was sold into bondage (picturing the Jews delivering Jesus to the Romans) he was 17 years of age (Genesis

37:2). The perennial mystery of the 153 fishes taken in the net in John 21:11 is related to the same meaning. Those fish represent the "catch" of the Gospel age—those of earth redeemed by Jesus during the present age—153 being the sum of the whole numbers 1 through 17. (The meal Jesus provided on the shore represented the nourishment of present truth afforded the saints at his second advent.)

### **New Testament Reference**

John 7:2 is the singular reference to the feast of tabernacles in the New Testament. John is the most particular of the gospel writers about marking the episodes of Jesus' ministry with the mention of particular feasts of the Jews. This allows us to sequence the narratives during the last 3 years of Jesus' life. John 2:13 refers to the first Passover of his ministry, John 5:1 is generally identified as a spring feast (Passover or Purim), and John 6:4 the third Passover.

The next feast mentioned is "the Jews' feast of tabernacles [which] was at hand." Jesus advised his relatives to go up to the feast without him, and he later journeyed privately. In the midst of the feast "Jesus went up into the temple, and taught" (John 7:14), resulting in an intense interchange between himself and his enemies. The end of his ministry was but six months away, and he was increasingly direct about his position. "Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am . . . Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come" (John 7:27-30). On "the last day, that great day of the feast," evidently the eighth day which climaxed the feast, "Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (John 7:37).

This reference to water was triggered by a custom explained by the Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary: "The generally joyous character of this feast broke out on this day into loud jubilation, particularly at the solemn moment when the priest, as was done on every day of this festival, brought forth, in golden vessels, water from the stream of Siloah, which flowed under the temple-mountain, and solemnly poured it upon the altar. Then the words of Isaiah 12:3 were sung, 'With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of Salvation.'"

What an appropriate moment for our Lord to step forth and declare that in him was the fulfillment of the prophecy: "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38). This was an offer of everlasting life to those who would drink freely of this living water.

"What an offer! The deepest cravings of the human spirit are here . . . expressed by the figure of thirst, and the eternal satisfaction of them by drinking. To the woman of Samaria he had said almost the same thing, and in the same terms (John 4:13,14). But what to her was simply affirmed . . . as a fact, is here turned into a world-wide proclamation" (A Commentary, Jamieson, Fausset, Brown).

Those who drink of this refreshing supply require no other supply. Trials may perplex and troubles assail, but the compliant and grateful heart need never again thirst for

another source of life. Today this precious water is appreciated by precious few. In due course it will be a river reaching every man, woman, and child. "In that day living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them to the eastern sea [the Dead Sea, mankind in their graves], and half of them toward the western sea [the Mediterranean, refreshing the living dead] . . . the LORD shall be king over all the earth in that day . . . the nations . . . shall go up year to year to worship the King . . . and to keep the feast of tabernacles" (Zechariah 14:8,9,16).

## The Day of Atonement

# A Sabbath of Affliction

*For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever.—Leviticus 16:30,31*

Aaron Kuehmichel

Leviticus chapter 8 describes the consecration of the priesthood. Once the priesthood was consecrated, the events of Leviticus chapter 9 followed. It describes the consecration of the service of the priesthood for the nation of Israel. Both the rituals in Leviticus 8 and 9 were necessary for, and preceded the atonement of, sin offerings in Leviticus 16.

Leviticus 16 gives the procedure the high priest was to follow for atoning for the sins of the nation once a year. This day, the Day of Atonement, is specifically stated as being the tenth day of Tishri, the seventh month. For this service, the high priest washed and cleansed himself completely, dressed in a white linen robe, and slew a bullock at the entrance to the holy. The blood was collected and taken into the tent, incense was put upon coals, and the blood was sprinkled upon the mercy seat in the most holy. The high priest then came out to the door of the holy (where two goats were tied), determined which goat was to be the Lord's goat, and except for the offering of incense performed the same ritual with this goat as he did with the bullock. When he came out the second time, the mingled blood of the bullock and goat was used to sanctify the holy and the altar. Then the high priest confessed the sins of the people over the remaining goat and sent it out into the wilderness by the hand of a fit man. Once the scapegoat was sent out, the high priest removed his white linen garment, washed and cleansed himself completely again, then changed back into his high priest robes. He then slew two rams and offered them with the fat of the bullock and the goat as a burnt offering. The bodies of the bullock and goat were then taken outside of the court of the tabernacle and completely burned there. Once the burnt offering was made the high priest could leave. The offering for sin was complete.

God signified the acceptance of the atonement sacrifice to the high priest by sparing his life. If anything was done incorrectly in this service, the high priest would die. The Israelites, who were outside of the court of the tabernacle, could not discern God's acceptance of this offering. They were not witnesses of the events transpiring within and would need a different method of being informed. There were four ways they would know the offering for sin was progressing and acceptable thus far:

1. the appearance of the scapegoat outside the tabernacle by the hand of a fit man (Leviticus 16:21,22);
2. the ascension of smoke from the fat and flesh on the burnt altar;
3. the bringing of the bodies of the bullock and goat to be burned outside (Leviticus 16:27);
4. the appearance of the high priest after the ceremony was over (compare Luke 1:20).

Three things were accomplished with the Day of Atonement ceremony:

1. The nation's consciousness of sin was aroused.
2. The atonement for sin was made.
3. The hearts of the Israelites were turned back to God.

### **Consciousness of Sin**

The high priest and priests were the representatives of God to the people. One way this was indicated was by the different manner the sin offerings of Leviticus 9 and 16 were accepted. In Leviticus 9, God sent fire to consume the sin and the burnt offerings on the altar. In this way, God showed that he approved of the priesthood's service. However, in Leviticus 16 God did not burn the sin and burnt offerings, the priests did. They provided the fire that consumed the offerings, and because they did, they represented God to the people, i.e., they were his representatives.

The Day of Atonement was a very solemn event, a holy convocation, a time when the Israelites were to have their sins atoned. However, the very ceremony that would cleanse them required the cleansing of God's representatives and his holy tabernacle (Leviticus 16:16-20, 23,33; Exodus 30:10,11,16). The high priest and priesthood, though the representatives of God, were human and thus liable to sin. Because sin is so pervasive and defiling, even the sanctuary of God became defiled by the interaction with the priesthood and Israel.

Leviticus 16:33 tells us of five things that needed to be atoned for this day: 1) the [most] holy sanctuary; 2) the [holy] tent of meeting; 3) the altar; 4) the priests; and 5) all the people of the assembly [New American Standard Updated]. One would normally consider the high priest, the priesthood, and the tabernacle as being holy and undefiled. But on this day they needed to be cleansed as well. An "Israelite indeed" (John. 1:47) could not help but realize how sin contaminated his relationship to God.

## **Atonement for Sin**

This day was to atone for the sins of the nation of Israel and to give its people a standing of righteousness before God. Some state that atonement was for Israel's sins for the past year. Others say it was atonement for the sins of the coming year. Which view is correct?

The Jewish year followed the lunar cycle, not the solar. A year was divided into months according to the cycle of the moon. Observers watched for the first glimpse of the new moon, a small crescent, and when seen, the new month was heralded with the blowing of two silver trumpets (Numbers 10:2,10). The Jewish year was also divided into two main seasons: winter and summer. Winter commenced with the start of the rainy season and was when the Israelites planted their crops. The month of Tishri marked the start of the rainy season and the beginning of the new agricultural or civil year.

Israel was an agricultural society and had three main occupations: raising crops, tending flocks, and cultivating vineyards. These three activities figured prominently in the calendar and festivals. The Israelites had seven main festivals: three with the barley harvest, three at the end of the harvesting of the agricultural year, and one between these two periods at the time of the wheat harvest. With the exception of the Day of Atonement, each of these major festivals was set to the moon, either on a new moon (the beginning of the month) or on a full moon (the middle of the month).

However, God instituted a sacred calendar year with a separate starting point for it, the month of Nisan. Nisan is best known for the festivals Israel kept in this month: Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the Feast of Firstfruits. Nisan is the month of the exodus and the month the tabernacle of God was first raised and inaugurated. It is also the start of the harvest season; the first harvest of the sacred year is of barley.

The sacred year follows the harvest cycle of three main crops: barley, wheat, and grapes. The agricultural or civil year follows the natural progression of planting: tilling, sowing, and harvesting. The agricultural and sacred year offset the starting point of the new year by six months. In the agricultural year, Tishri (the month of the Day of Atonement) was the first month of the year. In the sacred year, Tishri was the seventh month, and Nissan, the month of the barley harvest, was the first month.

Now let us consider the question: Did the Day of Atonement atone for the sins of the past or for the future year? Viewing the Jewish year from the perspective of the agricultural calendar (starting with Tishri) implies that atonement is for future sins in the coming year because atonement was made in the beginning of the year. The sacred calendar implies that atonement is for the past year because atonement is made later in the year in Tishri, the seventh month.

The perspective of the sacred calendar is correct and atonement was made for the sins past. The order of events supports this view. First Israel committed to keeping the law of God. Then the tabernacle was built. It was raised and sanctified (Leviticus 8 and 9) in Nissan, the first month of the year. The Day of Atonement occurred six months later, in

the month of Tishri. During the intervening months, the five offerings in Leviticus chapters 1 to 7 (burnt, meal, peace, sin, and trespass offerings) were offered as the people recognized and repented of their sins. These offerings indicated the acknowledgement of their standing before God, their recognition of God's grace and mercy, and their thankfulness. They were acceptable to God because the offerer had a standing before him; they were under the Law and they had a means to interact with God through the priesthood and the tabernacle. These sacrifices were to maintain their relationship; God's acceptance indicated his forgiveness. Because the Israelites did not recognize or offer sacrifices for all of their sins, they lost their standing of righteousness before God. (Committing sin made them guilty under the Law; recognition, acknowledgement, and repentance of sin made their hearts right before God.) Hence the Atonement Day sacrifices returned Israel to a standing before God; justice was met with the sacrifice of the bullock and goat, and the two rams indicated God's acceptance of the offering for sin.

It is important to note that while atonement was for past sins, it restored the Israelites' relationship with God for the future year so he could work with them.

### **Redirecting the Hearts**

The third accomplishment of the Day of Atonement was to redirect the hearts of the people, and hence the nation, to God. Even as it marked a natural turning of the year, it also marked a turning point for Israel. (In the civil calendar Tishri was the start of the new year; in the sacred calendar Tishri was the last harvest month.) It was a day of judgment, a day of repentance, and a day of forgiveness. Most importantly, it was a day of renewal; they were, again, restored to a pure relationship with God.

There is an amazing dichotomy in this Day of Atonement. This day was marked as one of the festivals Israel was to keep, yet it was also a holy day, a day of convocation. Because of the importance and holiness of this day, it was a day of rest in which no work could be done. All festival days were days of rest (Leviticus 16:29; 23:7-36). This day was also an important day of rejoicing for they had been forgiven of their sins and now had a relationship of righteousness once more before God. Festivals and rejoicing, by their very definitions, imply celebration, merriment, and feasting. However, this was not the case for this ritual. This day was a day of fasting (Leviticus 23:27; Numbers 29:7.) It was the only day of fasting Israel celebrated before going into exile.

Perhaps the best illustration of the solemnity of this day mixed with the rejoicing (joy of forgiveness) is expressed in the way Christians observe the Memorial of our Lord's death. The Scriptures do not say how Israel celebrated this day other than it was a rest day and a fast day. One can only imagine how the people felt that day. As a Christian keeps the Memorial, he rejoices inwardly for the gift of God's son, the relationship he has as one of God's people, and the promise of salvation for all. Yet this rejoicing is tempered with the realization that the gift came at a great price. God gave his only beloved son because God so loved his creation (John 3:16). Christ gave his life willingly because he so loved his father. Lastly, a Christian reflects upon the course of his life, both

the days past and those yet ahead. With that reflection, he sorrows for sins and shortcomings, and determines to do better in the future.

Perhaps this Day of Atonement was kept by a similar demeanor of celebration. As the Israelites fasted and rested, they turned their hearts and thoughts toward the tabernacle and toward God. They saw the high priest go into the tabernacle and they watched for the signs of God's acceptance of their atonement offering. As they watched and waited, they reflected on their sins of the past year. As the mental list of their shortcomings grew, perhaps the tears of sorrow and repentance flowed proportionately as well. Would God forgive me, would God forgive us, his people? Would the high priest complete everything properly so we can be forgiven? As they waited, their hopes and anxieties were heightened by the passage of time.

Finally, the high priest came out of the tabernacle. Yes! God had forgiven their sins and they were, again, his people. This day magnified God's grace, for the remission of sins had been given.

## God's Miraculous Salvation

# The Feast of Purim and the Lot of the Jew

*The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.—Proverbs 16:33*

Donald Holliday

"And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram" (Genesis 15:17,18). Before the seed of Abraham came into existence, the process leading to their ultimate bonding with the Lord was portrayed in terms of "smoking furnace" experiences. Such has been the history of this ancient people of God to this day. The Jew has been likened to the bush that burned but was not consumed. The story is all but told. The final chapter is now before us.

Although it lies outside the seven months of the religious feasts of the Lord established in the Law, Purim is a feast highly regarded by the Jews. It commemorates deliverance from the attempted genocide of the Jewish race through the faith and courage of Mordecai and Esther (Esther 9:16-32). Purim derives its name from the "lot" (*pur*) which Haman cast in order to decide when he should carry into effect the decree issued by the king for the extermination of the Jews (Esther 9:24). It was to be celebrated on the fourteenth day of Adar (March) by those in villages and unwallied towns and on the fifteenth day by those in fortified cities (Esther 9:18,19). The Book of Esther is read in the synagogue on this day. It became a time for rejoicing and distribution of food and presents. Dramatic representations of the events in the account have accompanied this feast, none so dramatic as the scenes which began it, nor the scenes which will fulfil it in our times.

### **The Story of Esther**

The story of Esther occurs at an interesting time in Bible history. It concerns not the land of Israel, but rather the Jews of the dispersion, revealing the Lord's watch-care even for these.

The Jewish millennium from Moses to Jeremiah ended with disaster. After repeated warnings and disciplines the full judgment of the Lord fell upon a wayward people. Their covenant was broken, their temple destroyed, and the people scattered as captives in the Babylonian empire. There they were to remain until the coming of Cyrus. However, after the first painful years, many Jews became accustomed to their foreign surroundings and some even began to prosper in Babylon. A new generation was rising. When the empire fell before the incoming Persian king, Cyrus, the opportunity to return to their own land was announced. But many were reluctant to leave their comforts in Babylon to face the unknown privations that would accompany the rebuilding of their former land now lying desolate.

So it was in the times of Esther, some 60 years after the decree of Cyrus, that many Jews remained scattered in what was then the Persian empire. Some held respectable positions in the Persian world and Mordecai was one of them.

Mordecai's uncle died in Persia leaving his motherless daughter, Hadassah (Esther), to the care of Mordecai. Employed in the royal palace at Susa, he attracted the favorable notice of the monarch, Xerxes, because he discovered a plot to assassinate the king. Eventually Mordecai became the grand vizier of the Persian empire.

Haman was the villain as he plotted to destroy all the Jews. Haman was a descendant of the Amalekites, the archenemies of the Jews (compare Esther 3:1 with Deuteronomy 25:17-19; Exodus 17:8-16; and 1 Samuel 15). In Deuteronomy 25:17-19 the Lord warned his people to have nothing to do with Amalek forever. They were to recall their peril at that old enemy's hands.

In the language of types, the battle with the Amalekites as the Israelites came out of Egypt represented their fight against doubt and that sad lack of trust in their God which so soon beset the people he had so mightily delivered. (Their success in the battle depended upon the up-reaching arms of Moses.) Nor was the battle over then, as king Saul was later to learn at his cost (1 Samuel 15:8-23—see also Hebrews 3:17 to 4:2).

Haman had worked his way into the king's confidence. He expected everyone to honor him, but Mordecai knew Haman's origin. Mordecai remembered the warning words of his God and refused to bow down to him. This so enraged Haman that he determined to wipe out the entire race of Jews throughout the Persian domain (Esther 3:6-11).

### **The Nazi Holocaust**

"Without faith, it is impossible to please him" (Hebrews 11:6). The typical background is of relevance in the story of Esther when so many ears turned deaf to the cry that the time to favor Zion had come. But the matter does not stop there, for our own generation has witnessed a parallel with those troublous days. Again it is the old enemy Amalek, a disbelief in the promises and power of God, that held back so many Jews on foreign soil when the time to return to their land had come. In Old Testament times the dark cloud was Haman, his own ambitions, and his resentment of the position Jews were gaining in the land. In our day it was Hitler with similar motivations. Furthermore, there is a striking time parallel between the days of Haman's rise to power with such evil intent, and the rise of Hitler from 1934 onwards.<sup>1</sup>

Here lies a remarkable confirmation that we are indeed living in the days of Christ's return of whom Cyrus was clearly a type (Isaiah 44:28 to 45:1; "anointed" means "Messiah").

The story of Esther's part is familiar to all who have read the account in the book bearing her name, and it contains timely lessons as much for ourselves as for the natural seed of Abraham. Mordecai himself explains how Esther became queen of Persia and for what

divinely overruled purpose. The palace knew the Jewish background of Mordecai (Esther 3:4) but not of Esther (Esther 2:10).

Haman consulted his advisors to determine when fortune would favor his plan to slaughter the Jews (Esther 9:26-31; 3:7). They cast lots to determine the day of execution. For successive days the lot was cast without result until nearly a year in the count passed by. At last the lot fell. Did this point to a late event in their history? In Haman's mind the lot of the Jew was destruction, but the Lord had yet to have his say as to the lot of his people.

Haman slandered the Jews before the king, and offered the monarch over \$25,000,000 in silver if he gave permission to slay them. Haman lied about the evil attributed to the Jews, of course. He was sponsored by Satan, a liar and a murderer from the beginning. Foolishly, Xerxes gave Haman his ring and the authority to carry out his plan, not realizing that the life of his own queen was at stake. Haman wasted no time; that very month he had the decrees written and sent out, ordering the Persians to destroy, kill, and plunder all the Jews in the vast reaches of the kingdom on the appointed day.

### **A Plot Foiled**

"The LORD hath brought you forth out of the iron furnace" (Deuteronomy 4:20). Thus it was that the courage and faith of Mordecai and Esther were put to the test. This trust was rewarded in full. Once the royal decree had gone forth to exterminate the Jewish race Persian law would not allow the decree to be revoked. However, the king could make a counter decree that the Jews could resist this attack and consume their enemies. But to achieve this intervention would require Esther to risk her life.

Mordecai went into mourning at the king's gate. He was not ashamed to be identified with the people of God although he had wisely counseled Esther not to reveal her race. Esther was deeply concerned on hearing of his sorrowful state, and pleaded that he stop, but he revealed to her his cause for lament. Esther had not seen the king for a month (Esther 4:11) and was probably quite unaware of all that was going on. Mordecai sent her a copy of the king's decree to bring fully home to her the peril they were in.

In Esther 4:11 the high risks of the situation are faced so far as any attempt at intervention from Esther was concerned. Yet now it must have been dawning upon her why she had been brought to the position she now held as queen of Persia. Mordecai reminded her that her own life was already in jeopardy and that without action her position could not save her. Yet he had faith in God's covenant arrangement with Abraham and acknowledged his power to deliver even in the darkest hour. He said, "If you hold your peace, God will send deliverance some other way!"

Esther sets an example to all in dire distress by seeking the Lord in prayer. The name of God is never mentioned openly in the account. This account tells of the faith achieved in the unseen God.

Esther knew that to enter the king's presence uninvited could mean her death. She resolved that she would be, nevertheless, a "living sacrifice" if this was in accordance with God's perfect will. "If I perish, I perish!" If the attempt to deliver her own race involved her death, so be it. (See Daniel 3:13-18.)

### **Esther's Confession**

"The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord!" (Proverbs 21:1). Esther was now forced to confess her place among the people of God. For three days she fasted and prayed, and with her all the Jewish people. Then on the third day she entered the throne room standing trembling at the door. The king saw her there and, realizing that something very important must have prompted this act, his heart was touched; he stretched forth his golden scepter to beckon her.

Showing great discretion, Esther did not reveal at once all that was in her heart. Instead, she invited the king and Haman to a banquet that very day. After several courses of food, the time came for the wine course, a time when the king would be exceptionally happy. He knew that Esther had a matter on her heart, so he asked about it. But the wise queen delayed another day, and the king yielded to her wishes. Haman went home elated, puffed up with pride that he should enjoy such an exclusive banquet with royalty. Proudly he boasted of his exaltation to family and friends. But he was so indignant at the repeated failure of Mordecai to reverence him that at his wife's advice he built an enormous means of destruction for the hated Jew—a gallows fifty cubits high from which, this "final solution" would be witnessed in public display.<sup>2</sup>

Nothing could prevent this most serious attempt to exterminate every Jew. That could not be changed. Nevertheless, there was also to be a most remarkable reversal. The outcome would be that the Jew so despised and hated was to become highly honored, while his enemies were to be destroyed.

### **The God of Israel Triumphant**

"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper . . . this is the heritage of the servants of the LORD" (Isaiah 54:17). The account records how the downfall of Haman was achieved. The thwarting of Satan's attempted annihilation of the Jews in our own time under Hitler, and the resulting rebirth of Israel, is but a stage in the full, exciting story. The Jew has a destiny of exaltation and honor which will become a means of the greatest blessing mankind has ever known or dreamed in the kingdom arrangements of God's dear son.

But first this ancient race must stand up and be counted as the people of God. They need once more to turn to their God in fasting and most earnest petition, and to realize at last that power of faith and that strength of obedient trust which is the life-force of those who, through smoking furnaces, become welded and forever bonded with their Lord.

"But the LORD hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace . . . to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day" (Deuteronomy 4:20).

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<sup>1</sup>. 476 B.C. is 60 years after Cyrus, 536 B.C., and the Esther period until death of Xerxes in 465 B.C. occupied a further 11 years. The parallel from 1874 is the period of Hitler's rise and his evil attempt to wipe out the Jewish race from 1934 to 1945 A.D.

<sup>2</sup>. Under the Nazis every living Jew old and young, male and female was slated for destruction. Three-quarters of Hitler's victims died within an eleven-month period alone (March 1942 to February 1943).

## The Hasmonean Revolt

# The Feast of Dedication

*And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter.—John 10:22*

The struggle for freedom in the land of Israel has been a long and arduous one. A land no larger than the state of New Jersey has seen more battles than any other country in the world. The land has been desired and fought over by every major world empire since Abraham was first promised it for a possession. This struggle for independence has been enshrined in major observances in the feasts and festivals of the Jews. The great feast of Passover commemorates their deliverance from Egypt; the Feast of Tabernacles the entrance into the promised land with the hope and assurance of the overthrow of the nations then occupying Canaan; the feast of Esther commemorates the rescue of the Jews from the insidious plot of Haman to ethnically cleanse their race; and the feast of Dedication celebrated their national deliverance from an oppressive regime by the purification of the temple of Jerusalem, the one emblem of their national existence, previously polluted by the Syrian leader Antiochus Epiphanes.

### **The Hasmonean Revolt**

The circumstances that gave birth to the Feast of Dedication belong to the period between the Old and New Testaments, around the second century B.C. Often referred to as the Hasmonean revolt because it was led by a family of the Hasmonean priestly order, it was an ideological and political conflict that led to a brief but significant independence for the Jews of Palestine, but ultimately to Roman domination.

Upon the death of Alexander the Great, his middle eastern empire was divided into the Seleucid (present day Syria, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, and Israel) and Ptolemaic (Egypt) kingdoms. With the ascension of Antiochus Epiphanes IV (circa 175-163 B.C.), a powerful Seleucid ruler, the Hellenization of Palestine and the Jews commenced. The Seleucid rulers were steeped in the culture of the Greeks which included a common language, philosophy, education, and a belief in polytheism and the practice of "king worship." Even though Antiochus Epiphanes originally granted religious autonomy to the provinces of the kingdom, his goal was to strengthen his crumbling empire by Hellenizing his domain.

In 169 B.C. Antiochus Epiphanes decreed a ban on Judaism and took other anti-Jewish measures to bring the Jewish population to its knees. Circumcision was prohibited; proscribed worship of Greek deities, especially of Antiochus Epiphanes as the god Zeus, was instituted; and worship was forbidden on the Sabbath. Antiochus installed an image of the god Zeus in the Jewish temple at Jerusalem and heathen sacrifices were inaugurated. During this time and in protest, there were waves of bloody riots in Jerusalem. The group chiefly responsible was known as the "Hasidim," or "the Pious," a

movement that later developed into the Pharisees and who, at the time, represented the majority of the Jewish population in Palestine.

In approximately 168 B.C. Antiochus sent his representatives to enforce these anti-Jewish decrees. Jerusalem was ordered sacked and Jews were murdered on the Sabbath, knowing that they would not resist. The following year the temple at Jerusalem was officially dedicated to the god Zeus. Approximately a thousand Hasidim refugees, defiant of the new laws, were slaughtered on the Sabbath in their mountain hideout.

Troops and representatives were sent throughout Palestine to force the Jews to sacrifice to Zeus. One Sabbath day, they entered the small town of Modin. In an attempt to gain the cooperation of the inhabitants, arrangements were made for an apostate Jew to sacrifice a pig to Zeus. Here an elderly priest, Mattathias of the Hasmonean priestly family, killed the king's messenger. Mattathias, his five sons, and a band of their followers fled to the nearby mountains. They were joined by the Hasidim who provided the religious inspiration and ideological purity that the Hasmoneans needed to justify and gain support for their revolt.

In 166 B.C. Mattathias died and the leadership of the revolt passed to his son Judas Maccabeus (meaning the "hammer" which described his tactical methods of warfare). Judas against great odds and the might of the Seleucid army prevailed and in 165 B.C. he captured Jerusalem, the feat for which he is most remembered. There he purified and rededicated the temple previously defiled by the worship of Zeus and the sacrifice of unclean animals. Led by the Hasmonian family, warfare continued and in a few short years Palestine was freed from Syrian oppression, both religiously and politically. But freedom was short-lived. In spite of treaties meant to insure the safety of the Jewish communities in Palestine, they were again forced into bondage under Rome.

### **Messianic Expectations**

The Messianic vision at the time of the first advent was after the tradition of the ancient warriors of history—Moses, Joshua, David, Gideon, and Judas Maccabeus—the mighty who had delivered the nation from their oppressors. Trodden down by Roman oppression, this was again their national hope. At the time of Jesus' birth all were longing for the Messiah (Luke 2:15; 24:21) but not as the one described in Isaiah 53 who had "no form nor comeliness" and in whom they say there is "no beauty" that they "should desire him." So they hid as it were their faces from him; he was despised, and they esteemed him not. They were not looking for the one who must suffer before he would enter into his glory.

They had misread all the types and prophecies that pointed to their Messiah and they did not welcome the lowly and gentle Jesus, a seeming transient who traversed the craggy hills of Israel with an odd band of poor and unlearned followers, who was "despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief and for whom it was needed that he be wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities." They did not realize that to achieve lasting freedom, they must first be healed from sin and death. And thus the memory of these great victors of the past and their present hope and desire

to escape still another unbearable servitude had reshaped their image of Messiah and it was into this atmosphere Jesus was born and reared.

### **Jesus at the Feast of Dedication**

At the culmination of his ministry Jesus attended for the last time the great feasts of Tabernacles and Dedication. Like Moses and Judas Maccabeus who brought deliverance to the nation, he was the true deliverer typified and exemplified in these very feasts.

These two festivals stand related to one another both externally and internally. The feast of Dedication, or Hanukkah as it is called today, is derived from the Feast of Tabernacles. In 2 Maccabees 10:5,6 we read of the origin of the mode of observation of this feast: "And they [Maccabees] kept eight days with joy, after the manner of the feast of the tabernacles, remembering that not long before they had kept the feast of the tabernacles when they were in the mountains, and in dens like wild beasts." Both celebrated a divine deliverance which once again gave to Israel her land and her freedom, at the hands of God through great deliverers: Moses and Judas Maccabeus. The same series of psalms (called the Hillel) were read at both feasts as well as at the Passover. These psalms (113-118) contain numerous allusions to the nature and work of Jesus their Messiah. At both feasts palm branches are carried, symbolic of victory after overcoming great odds.

More meaningful than the outward observances is the meaning attached to the Feast of Dedication and the Feast of Tabernacles. Both feasts commemorated a divine victory which reunited them in their own land after formidable privations. In symbol at the Feast of Dedication a re-lighting of the great light was commemorated, the one that had been extinguished in the temple because of heathen worship. Now that great light that came into the world to light every man stood before them, the one who had been promised of old (Isaiah 42:6; Malachi 4:2). How appropriate that the last celebration our Lord would attend in his life would be the one where light and purification and national deliverance were the central theme. As that first Festival of Lights celebrated the purification of the temple from heathen defilement by a great deliverer as symbolized in the re-lighting of the temple lamps, here stood in that very same temple the true light of the world, the true deliverer, and the one who would ultimately purify all mankind through his great sacrifice.

As he walked on Solomon's porch, the scribes and Pharisees again endeavored to entrap him with the ultimate goal of killing him. In essence they asked him, "Just tell us that you are really the Christ, the Messiah." Little did they realize that he was their Messiah in a grander and more loftier sense than they ever thought possible. But he was not the Messiah for which they were looking. Thus on this occasion he does not tell them the answer they wished to hear. Instead he refers them to his teachings and miraculous works which more than anything affirmed that he was truly the Messiah. Had he so proclaimed at this moment and in the sense and with the objects which they required, it is possible they would have instantly welcomed him with tumultuous alacrity as the common people did a few months later when they proclaimed him their king. All the allusions he made to himself, especially at these two feasts, were taken from prophecies from the Old Testament that pointed to the Messiah: living water that would assuage the spiritual thirst

and give life (John 7:39; Isaiah 55:1); the light of the world, the true Messiah promised of old (John 8:12; Isaiah 42:6; Malachi 4:2); the one sent from the father to save (Job 33:24; Psalm 118:25) Surely had they known their Scriptures they would have recognized in him their Messiah.

### **The Sheep and the Shepherd**

The image of the sheep and the shepherd runs continually through the Old Testament Scriptures. Here at this feast he continues the reference to sheep from the discourse he had started at the Feast of Tabernacles. The scribes and Pharisees were no strangers to this allusion. The nation was pictured as sheep (Psalm 79:13; 78:52; Jeremiah 50:17) and their leaders were the shepherds (Ezekiel 34:2; Jeremiah 23:1). Had they but realized it the great shepherd now stood before them, the one who truly could save them (Genesis 49:24). The reference to sheep had been there in the first sacrifices (Genesis 4:2); in the ram that replaced Isaac (Genesis 22:13); in the sacrifices of the tabernacle, etc. Had they truly understood their Scriptures, they would have known that the true Messiah must first suffer and die before true liberty and freedom could be effected.

But as they were not the true sheep of his flock, he was not their shepherd. They were hireling shepherds who had not guided the sheep to pasture. Had they been true to their cause, they would have properly led the nation to accept Christ as the great shepherd. Had they been the sheep of God they would have received the eternal life to which he referred. Here at the end of his ministry they again asked him to proclaim himself Messiah. But he had already done that and they had not heard him. In John 10:7 in his parable of the sheep he says, "I am the door of the sheep." In John 10:30 he proclaims that he and his father are one—one in plan and purpose. In John 10:36 he declares himself to be the "Son of God." But now the day for national deliverance was over; it was now the time for the true deliverance, eternal and lasting—a deliverance greater than Judas Maccabeus or any of their great judges and deliverers could ever hope to accomplish. The greater than Solomon, the greater than Moses, and the greater than Judas Maccabeus was about to die for the sins of the world.

# Poems and Short Features

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## Cleanse Me

Forever here my rest shall be,  
Close to thy wounded side,  
This all my hope and all my plea,  
For me the Savior died.

My dying Saviour and my Lord,  
Fountain for guilt and sin,  
Sprinkle me ever with thy blood;  
O! cleanse and keep me clean.

Wash me, and make me thus thine own;  
Wash me, and mine thou art;  
Wash me, but not my feet alone—  
My hands, my head, my heart.

Th' atonement of thy blood apply,  
Till faith to sight improve,  
Till hope in full fruition die,  
And all my soul be love.

—Hymns of Dawn, Number 52

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## The Good Lord Pardon Every One

*But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, The good LORD pardon every one. —2 Chronicles 30:18*

Amongst those who came to the Passover from the northern tribes, some ate the Passover without having performed the purifyings stipulated by the law. King Hezekiah might without impropriety have made a great ado over this fact. He might have berated the visiting brethren on their ignorance, their stupidity, their saturation with idolatry to the neglect of their God's commandments. He might have ordered them to be driven from the Holy City. But he did more wisely. He prayed for them, asking Divine mercy for their error. Similarly, in the church of Christ, we at times find some who but imperfectly comprehend the sanctification of life necessary to a proper participation in the Lord's "feast of fat things." Let us be wise in our dealing with such; let us not denounce them as hypocrites nor hold up their shortcomings. Let us pray for them and assist them in the more excellent way. Let us remember the words . . . "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." Let us be less punctilious respecting forms and ceremonies, and more lovingly sympathetic with the expressions of heart of all those who seek to draw nigh unto the Lord.

—Reprints, ppg. 4812, 4813

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## The Better Gift

Gracious Father,  
Lord of Hosts,  
Taught by Thee,  
we covet most,  
Of Thy gifts at  
Pentecost,  
Holy, heavenly  
love.

Faith that  
mountains could  
remove,  
Tongues of earth  
or heaven above,  
Knowledge, all  
things, empty  
prove,  
Without heavenly  
love.

Love is kind,  
and suffers  
long,  
Love is meek,  
and thinks no  
wrong.  
Love than death  
itself more  
strong,  
Therefore give  
us love.

Prophecy will  
fade away,  
Melting in the  
light of day.  
Love will ever  
with us stay,  
Therefore give  
us love.

—Bible  
Students'  
HymnalNumber  
106

## The Seven Jewish Feasts of Lev. 23

Feast	Jewish Month	Day	Religious Month	Civil Month	Corresponding Month	Additional Reference
Passover	Nisan	14	1	7	March – April	Ex. 12:1-14, Mt. 26:17-20
* Unleavened Bread	Nisan	15-21	1	7	March – April	Ex. 12:15-20
Firstfruits	Nisan	14	1	7	March – April	Num. 28:26
	Iyyar		2	8		
* Pentecost (Harvest or Weeks)	Sivan	6 (50 days after barley harvest)	3	9	May – June	Deut. 16:9-12, Acts 2:1
	Tammuz		4	10	June - July	
	Ab		5	11	July -August	
	Elul		6	12	August - September	
Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah)	Tishri	1,2	7	1	September - October	Num. 29:1-6
Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)	Tishri	10	7	1	September - October	Heb. 9:7
* Tabernacles (Booths or Ingathering)	Tishri	15-22	7	1	September - October	Neh. 8:13-18, Jn. 7:2
	Heshvan		8	2	October - November	
	Chisleu		9	3	November - December	
	Tebeth		10	4	December - January	
	Sebat		11	5	January - February	
	Adar		12	6	February - March	

## The Master's Voice

Sorrow sometimes fills our hearts and we see not the streams of joy and everlasting blessing which the Lord has for us; not until we hear his voice, his word, do we appreciate the truth. But all who know the Master truly know his voice, know his message, know his spirit, his disposition; as he himself expressed it, My sheep hear my voice and they follow me, they recognize not the voice of strangers.

—Reprints, p. 4176

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## The Praise Belongs To Him

I know if I am chosen to joint-heirship with my Lord,  
To reign with him in glory, to receive that great reward;  
If after all my weaknesses a crown for me he'll claim,  
I know that choice will surely bring great glory to God's name.

If I had been more worthy, and my stumblings had been few,  
When men gave God the glory, they'd have praised my virtue, too;  
If I'd ne'er lost a battle, or had never missed the mark,  
As they talked about his goodness, mine, also, they'd remark.

But my being so deficient, in thought and word and deed,  
Means he'll get all the glory—he deserves it all, indeed.  
When they see this weak mortal raised to such immortal heights,  
What praise will rise to him who in such nothingness delights!

I know that when my Savior did return to heaven above,  
And was crowned with wondrous glory, it did prove his Father's love;  
But thinking of Christ's merit, and his sinless life of grace,  
'Twas no wonder that Jehovah chose him for such a place.

With me it is so different; I have not one thing to plead,  
That I should be more honored than another bruised reed;  
And truly there's no reason to give me a mite of praise;  
To him belongs all glory for the joys which crown my days.

If you knew all my failings, and my blemishes so vile,  
And saw the loving patience my Father shows the while,  
'Twould amaze you beyond measure to think he could or would  
Make me an able servant who should do his people good.

Benjamin Barton

