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The Passover

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In the Beginning

The Passover

“The Passover” is a broad subject. We begin this issue with a look at *The Last Supper* of our Lord and his disciples, at which he instituted a memorial of his approaching death, using bread to symbolize his broken body and “fruit of the vine” to symbolize his shed blood. For the remainder of the issue we look back to the Old Testament Passover episodes. First, a detailed look at the type in *Time Elements of the Passover: Type and Antitype*. It was at this exodus observance of “Passover” that the celebration acquired its name from the “passing over” of the firstborn by the death angel at midnight, before the morning of Israel’s deliverance.

Some days after the Exodus Passover, the Israelites found themselves trapped between the wilderness and the Red Sea, which Pharaoh supposed was his grand opportunity. But God overruled it as an everlasting testimony to his saving power. Israel passing over the Red Sea is the subject of *The Eleventh Plague, the Eleventh Miracle*. Forty years later the Israelites “passed over” another watery barrier when the Jordan River was dried up for them. This is considered in *The Passover Renewed*.

Many years later, following the end of the northern kingdom of Israel, good king Hezekiah of Judah observed a grand Passover reuniting the scattered northern remnants of - Israel, discussed in *The Passover of Hezekiah*. King Josiah, the last noble king of Judah, tried to reform his people and observed another grand Passover, considered in the article *It is a Fearful Thing*. We end with a verse-by-verse examination of 2 Kings 2 which describes the “passing over” of Jordan by Elijah and Elisha, and the prophetic lessons contained in that experience.

These thoughtfully prepared lessons all speak in one way or another, through picture or direct exhortation, of the blessed benefits secured to us through our Passover Lamb as a ransom for our sins. He was actually perfect, sinless, we inherently sinful, but justified through his offering. And we have the gracious privilege of becoming part of the body of Christ by being transformed into his character likeness. The wisdom from above is pure, peaceable, gentle, easily intreated, merciful, fruitful, equitable and honest (James 3:17). These are the qualities we should emulate. “Therefore let us keep the feast ... with ... sincerity and truth” (1 Corinthians 5:8).

The Last Supper

He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves.—Luke 22:17

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all recount the institution of the memorial the last evening our Lord was with his disciples, the day we would term Thursday, which that evening had turned into the opening night of the fourteenth of Nisan. John speaks of the same evening, but as he wrote his gospel much later than the others, and the others had adequately covered the memorial institution, John omits these matters and recounts other significant events of the evening. For example, only John tells of our Lord washing the feet of his disciples, leaving us a lesson of humble service.

Matthew was the first gospel writer. His narrative is broad, inclusive, and arranged topically in the sense that some narratives are augmented with related experiences from different occasions. This is helpful for a comprehensive and conceptual understanding of our Lord's ministry, but it does not always distinguish subtle details of the narrative.

Mark, the amanuensis of Peter, was the second gospel writer and would have had access to Matthew's gospel. This explains the high degree of similarity in the material covered in these two gospels. Mark shortened the narratives and clarified specifics as an editor might do with a previous record before him. For example, Mark specifies that when Jesus cursed the fig tree, the disciples marveled at its withering the next morning, not moments after it was cursed (Mark 11:20,21; compare Matthew 21:19,20). Mark specifies that Jesus cast out the money changers the day following his triumphant ride into Jerusalem and inspection of the temple, showing that this was not a rash act of impulse, but the thoughtful discharge of duty (Mark 11:11-15; compare Matthew 21:10-12).

Luke, the associate of Paul, was the third gospel writer. He determined to arrange his narrative in "consecutive order" (Luke 1:3, NASB), include material Matthew and Mark had not, and clarify some details of sequence and number. Let us consider his account of the last supper. It begins: "When the hour was come, he [Jesus] sat down, and the twelve apostles with him" (Luke 22:14). In verse 16 he referred to a Passover "fulfilled in the kingdom of God," evidently symbolic of a celebration of victory together with the overcoming saints in glory. Verse 17 recalls Jesus' introduction of the cup which appears before any mention of the bread. This differs from the record in Matthew and Mark which pass by this first cup, mentioning only the second which came later.

This cup opened the ceremonies of the evening. It was customary for a host to pass such a cup to his guests, as we might offer beverages to arriving guests before an evening meal. Jesus gave it to his disciples to divide among themselves, explaining that he would not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the greater rejoicing in the kingdom to follow.

This is the cup referred to by Paul: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" (1 Corinthians 10:16). Notice that Paul mentions the cup before the bread which is appended in verse 17. There was a cup before dinner and

there was another later, after they had begun to dine. The later cup followed the emblem of the bread, but this first cup was before the dining.

In the next chapter Paul mentioned the bread first, then the cup which followed: “He took the cup also, after supper” (1 Corinthians 11:25, NASB). This is not the same cup though the meaning of Christ’s blood is attached to both. This is the cup which Matthew and Mark refer to when Jesus instituted the memorial symbolisms, and which Luke terms “the cup after supper” (Luke 22:20).

The Memorial Institution

Luke 22:19 begins the memorial institution proper. Matthew 26:26 says this occurred “as they were eating” the evening supper, which Luke for brevity does not disclose, but he does give the meaning of the symbol: “This is my body which is given for you.” He then proceeds to the cup: “Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you” (Luke 22:20). The word “shed” is even more graphic in the NIV and NASB which read “poured out” for you, agreeing more with the symbol which was poured for them.

By these two symbols, bread and wine—body and blood—Jesus represented the wholeness of his sacrifice on our behalf: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you” (John 6:53). Most gladly do we receive this precious gift of life once we appreciate the meaning of these symbols. But to the Jews who heard these words, it was a stumbling stone which their faith was insufficient to mount. Even the twelve were confused, but their faith was sufficient to endure until the matter was made clear (John 6:67-69). Without the ransom sacrifice of Christ on our behalf, we would have no standing, no life, no hope.

New Symbols

Jesus used familiar elements to which he applied new meanings. They had been intimated in the Old Testament, as for example Melchizedek had “brought forth bread and wine” (Genesis 14:18) for Abraham, laying down in type what our Lord Jesus, the greater Melchizedek, provides for the seed of Abraham. Joseph, while in prison, interpreted the dreams of the breadmaker (baker) and wine server (butler), about our Lord’s death (prison) experience (Genesis 40:5). Each dream referred to “three days,” representing the three days of our Lord in the grave. On the third day the baker’s life was over, his flesh destroyed, just as Jesus’ flesh which was given for the life of the world was at an end, not restored. The butler was lifted from prison and served Pharaoh in honor, just as Jesus was raised to life and seated at the right hand of God, to administer the wine of redemption. In this sense the symbols were not new.

But these symbols were new as pertains to the Passover season. In Egypt at the first Passover, Jesus’ body and blood were shown differently. It was not as bread and wine, but as the flesh of the lamb eaten by the Israelites, and the blood of the lamb sprinkled on the doorposts and lintels. There was unleavened bread in that ancient rite, but it did not

represent our Lord. The unleavened bread in the Passover type, as the bitter herbs, represented qualities or circumstances which accompany our feasting on the antitypical lamb Jesus. The bitter herbs represent the bitter experiences of life which draw us to the lamb. The unleavened bread represents the condition we wish to maintain, purged from the old leaven of malice and wickedness (1 Corinthians 5:7,8). Wine is not mentioned in the Passover type at all.

But at this last supper of our Lord, clearly there would be no blood on the table. Necessarily, Jesus would have to use a different symbol. Thus he took the wine to represent his blood shed for us. Following the suggestions in *Time Elements of the Passover: Type and Antitype* (p. 7) there would be no lamb on the table. So Jesus used the bread to represent his body.

The Betrayer

As early as John 6 when Jesus mentioned the new symbols of bread and wine, there is mention of a betrayer among his disciples: “Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?” (John 6:70). At the last supper when Jesus used these symbols as a memorial of his offering, the betrayer was still present: “Behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table” (Luke 22:21).

At this solemn point the spirit of rivalry sprang up again. Jesus’ mention of a betrayer seems to have provoked among some of them protestations of their fidelity, one vying with another for the greater dignity, “which of them should be accounted the greatest” (v. 24). Jesus admonished them respecting their attitude, that the chiefest among them should be the servant of all. This was amply demonstrated in his own example as he had continually cared for, nourished, and served them during the recent years and months of their association.

Probably it was at this point that Jesus illustrated his lesson by his own example: “He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded” (John 13:4,5). One by one he proceeded, probably in silence as the lesson of humility and service they saw became fixed in their memory and hearts, further sanctified by later reflection.

So should we, if we would be pleasing to the Lord, value the services we are able to render to the Lord’s people. Do we serve while others stand by? Let us value the privilege, rather than regret their lack. Do others serve while we are passed by? Let us thankfully appreciate and support the loving labors of others. Let the spirit of appreciation, humility, and eagerness to spend and be spent, mark our days.

Our Lord washed them all, even his betrayer: “Ye are clean, but not all” (John 13:10). “With all the ... accursed treachery in his false heart [Judas] ... had felt the touch of those kind and gentle hands, had been refreshed by the cleansing water, had seen that sacred head bent over his feet, yet stained as they yet were with the hurried secret walk

which had taken him into the throng of sanctimonious murderers over the shoulder of Olivet.”—Farrar, *The Life of Christ*, ppg. 285,286.

John's Account

Jesus took his place at the table again, but his heart was heavy. “He was troubled in spirit,” perhaps manifest with a tear or a quiver of voice, “and said, Verily, verily ... one of you shall betray me” (John 13:21). The disciples looked at one another, each sorrowing, asking “Lord, is it I?” (Matthew 26:22). John, close to Jesus, asked the same, and the master replied: “He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot” (John 13:26). The circumstances at last forced the question also of Judas: “Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said” (Matthew 26:25). “That thou doest, do quickly” (John 13:27), whereupon Judas departed, leaving the innocent disciples to suppose he was arranging something for the upcoming feast.

Do we ever have pricks of conscience? Do we respond with cold hearts, or contrite ones? Let us mark the circumstances of providence for our correction and seek “a principle within, of jealous, Godly fear, a sensibility of sin, a pain to feel it near” (Hymn 130).

Going Away ... Coming Again

Judas went out into the night: “Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him” said Jesus of his impending experience (John 13:31). Jesus then explained that he would leave his disciples and where he would go (to the Father), they could not then join him, but would later. These words were confusing to them but are clearer to us now.

“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:2,3).

In Jewish customs, these familiar words are actually words a bridegroom would speak to his bride-to-be when she has accepted his proposal for marriage. A young man tendering his proposal would offer his lady a cup of wine which, if accepted and imbibed, signaled a positive reply to the invitation, eliciting the words of our text from the groom.

It was customary for a man about to take a bride to return to his father’s home, and however spacious and commodious it may be, add onto it a new place for himself and his bride. When his father approved the construction, the groom would return at an unexpected moment to take his bride. Jesus had earlier passed the cup and his disciples had received it. Thus he affirmed in language of a groom to his bride that though he must go away, he would come again and receive them unto himself.

Our bridegroom went away for more than eighteen centuries, but he has returned and one by one is claiming the members of his bride to join in the holiest of matrimony on the other side. Soon will be the announcement, “his wife hath made herself ready”

(Revelation 19:7). Then will occur the joyous marriage and the regeneration of the groaning creation.

The remainder of John 14 took place in the upper room until Jesus announced: “Arise, let us go hence” (John 14:31). Jesus knew that Judas knew he often resorted to the Garden of Gethsemane, and willingly went to his destiny (John 18:2). On other occasions he had turned and walked **from** imminent danger knowing it was not the proper time. But this was the proper time, so he arose and walked **to** his appointment with prophecy.

As they walked eastward toward the Mount of Olives perhaps Jesus noticed the temple gates and the image of vines, eliciting his lesson of the vine and the branches of John 15. Through chapters 16 and 17 he exhorted them to love and faithfulness, soon crossing the brook Cedron leading to the foot of the mount and its olive grove. After three times in prayer, a band came to arrest him, but when he acknowledged them, “they went backward, and fell to the ground” (John 18:6). Again, Jesus could simply have walked away. But he called to them again, yielded himself, and paid for us our ransom.

Time Elements of the Passover: Type and Antitype

Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.—Exodus 12:5,6

George Tabac

In Exodus chapter 12 we are given the account of how the Passover lamb of Israel protected the firstborn from death and resulted in Israel's deliverance from Egypt. It is a beautiful type of Jesus being our antitypical Passover lamb, which will ultimately deliver not only the Church of the Firstborn, but all mankind from Adamic death.

As we consider the antitype during this memorial season, we would like to reflect on one of the perplexing issues that has faced brethren and biblical scholars for centuries. It has to do with the Lord's last supper when he instituted the memorial. John refers to it as an event that took place the night before Israel as a whole slew their Passover lambs, while Matthew, Mark, and Luke seem to imply that the last supper was the Passover meal. Let us consider the time element details of the typical and antitypical Passover to help clarify this question.

Lamb Slain Between the Two Evenings

When was the Passover lamb to be slain? Israel was told to take the Passover lamb into their homes on the tenth of Nisan. Then we are told: "So shall it be yours, to keep, until the fourteenth day of this month,—then shall all the convocation of the assembly of Israel slay it **between the two evenings**" (Exodus 12:6, Rotherham). This phrase comes from two Hebrew words: Strong's #996, *beyn*, meaning "between," and #6153, *ereb*, meaning "evening or evenings." What is meant by "between the two evenings"? There are two quite different views. (Note that the Jewish day was reckoned from sunset to sunset, 6 P.M. to 6 P.M. our time.)

One view is that the first evening refers to sunset at 6 P.M. our time when the Jewish fourteenth day of Nisan began, and the second evening refers to when it became completely dark. In this view "between the two evenings" would mean it was near the **beginning** of the new Jewish day.

A second view is that the first evening begins at twelve noon when the sun begins to set from the zenith, and the second evening is 6 P.M. when the sun set, ending the Jewish day. Thus "between the two evenings" would be **3 P.M.**, near the **ending** of the Jewish day. We believe this second view is correct for four reasons.

1. It becomes a type of the exact time (3 P.M.) our Lord died on the cross as the antitypical Passover lamb.

2. The exact same Hebrew phrase, “between the evenings,” is used in Exodus 29:38, 39 to describe the time the second daily sacrifice was to be offered: “This, moreover, is what thou shalt offer upon the altar, two lambs of a year old day by day, continually: the one lamb, shalt thou offer in the morning, and the **second lamb**, shalt thou offer between the evenings” (Rotherham). The King James translation has “other lamb” but the correct Hebrew should be “second lamb” (Strong’s #8145). Notice they were to offer the first lamb in the morning (that is daylight hours) and the second lamb “between the evenings,” that is later in the day. If “between the evenings” were to mean the beginning of the Jewish day (after 6 P.M.) then it would be the first offering of the day, not the **second** as this Scripture brings out. Thus the first of the daily continual burnt offerings was offered at 9 A.M. in the morning, and the second daily offering was at 3 P.M. This typifies the time when Jesus was crucified on the cross. Mark states Jesus was placed on the cross the third hour (9 A.M.) and died the ninth hour (3 P.M.) (Mark 15:25,34).

3. In this view “between the two evenings” would be toward the **ending** of the Jewish day. This same Hebrew word for “evening” when used without the modifier (#996, “between”), is used in many other Scriptures, which from the context obviously refers to a time toward the ending of the Jewish day, **not** the beginning. For example, in Leviticus 23:27 we are told the tenth day of the seventh month was the Day of Atonement: “On the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.” Then to impress on their minds the importance of observing this entire tenth day solemnly from its very beginning to its very end, in verse 32 they were to be ready to afflict their souls immediately toward the ending of the ninth day, to the ending of the tenth day: “It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath” (Leviticus 23:32). In the phrase “at even, from **even unto even**,” the Hebrew word for “even” is the same #6153, *ereb*, as used in “between the evenings.” This indicates it is referring to the ending of a day, not its beginning.

4. Josephus, the historian of Jesus’ day, stated that the evening sacrifice was at the ninth hour (our 3 P.M.). When referring to the time Jerusalem was under siege by Pompey in the first century B.C., he writes: “Any one may hence learn how very great piety we exercise towards God and the observance of his laws, since the priests were not at all hindered from their sacred ministrations by their fear during the siege, but did still twice each day, in the morning and about the **ninth hour**, offer their sacrifices on the altar” (*Antiquities*, 14, 4, 3).

Events of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth

As we proceed to the various accounts of what transpired on the fourteenth and fifteenth days of Nisan, follow the time elements of when they occurred on the lower half of the chart, View B. We believe it harmonizes all the events of that period.

The Passover lamb was slain toward the end of the fourteenth day of Nisan at 3 P.M. (Exodus 12:6, Rotherham, “between the two evenings”). It was then prepared and roasted

during the three hours yet remaining of the fourteenth day, the fifteenth day beginning at 6 P.M. It was the Passover lamb that was actually the meal that was eaten the night of the fifteenth (Exodus 12:8). This is also called the first day of the feast of unleavened bread. They were to eat the meal **in haste**, with staff in hand and all dressed ready to leave for a **journey quickly** (Exodus 12:11).

At midnight (of that same night when they ate the Passover) the firstborn were slain (Exodus 12:12,13). In Exodus 12:31-33 we are told the Egyptians then called for Moses **that night** and urged them to leave Egypt **in haste**. In Deuteronomy 16:1 we are told they left Egypt “by night,” and in Numbers 33:3 (Rotherham) we are told they left Rameses (where Israel lived in Egypt, Genesis 47:11) on the **fifteenth**, on the morrow of the Passover. All of this follows logically only if the Passover lamb was slain at 3 P.M. near the end of the Jewish fourteenth day.

If the top view, View A on the chart, were correct—that the Passover lamb was slain after 6 P.M. at the beginning of the fourteenth day, prepared then eaten and at midnight of the fourteenth the firstborn were slain—then Israel would not have left Egypt that night. Instead they would have had an eighteen-hour delay before leaving. We are told specifically that Israel left Egypt by **night** of the **fifteenth**, which would have been some eighteen hours or more later. Why would they have then been told to eat the meal in haste and to be dressed ready for a quick departure if it were not to take place until at least eighteen hours later? Note also that if this view were correct, it would have required the Israelites to go three days and two nights without sleep.

Note also in Exodus 12:11,12 that it was the same night they ate the Passover meal when the firstborn of Israel were passed over. Verse 14 says “**this day**” (that is, the day they **ate** the Passover lamb and the firstborn were **passed over**) was to be memorialized forever by a special holy convocation or Sabbath day. Leviticus 23:4-7 shows us the fourteenth was when the Passover lamb was slain, but verses 6 and 7 tell us the fourteenth was **not** the special holy Sabbath convocation, it was the **fifteenth** of Nisan. That special Sabbath day was in turn called the first day of the feast of unleavened bread. If the eating of the Passover and the deliverance of the firstborn were on the fourteenth, then the fourteenth should have been the day to be memorialized by a special holy Sabbath convocation. But it was not, it was the fifteenth. This indicates the eating of the Passover and the deliverance of the firstborn occurred on the **fifteenth** day, not the fourteenth day.

Unleavened Bread Eaten Seven Days, Not Eight

In Exodus 12:8 the Passover lamb was to be eaten with unleavened bread. If the lamb were slain and eaten at the beginning of the fourteenth, it would have been a separate meal in itself eaten with unleavened bread. Then it would be followed the next day by the feast of unleavened bread which was to continue for seven days to the twenty-first. Thus the total time the Israelites would have eaten unleavened bread and have their homes free of unleavened bread would be **eight days**, one day for the Passover meal and seven days for the feast of unleavened bread.

But in every reference regarding how long the Israelites were to eat unleavened bread and have their homes free of leaven the length is always given as seven days, never eight. For example, “You shall sacrifice the Passover to the LORD your God from the flock and the herd, in the place where the LORD chooses to establish his name. You shall not eat leavened bread with it; **seven days** you shall eat with it unleavened bread, the bread of affliction (for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste), in order that you may remember all the days of your life the day when you came out of the land of Egypt. For **seven days** no leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory” (Deuteronomy 16:2-4, NAS).

From this Scripture we see they only ate unleavened bread seven days including eating it with the **Passover** meal. Thus eating the Passover was not a separate meal on the fourteenth, but rather it was the main food eaten on the first day of the feast of unleavened bread that was the fifteenth. Note also how the phrase “seven days you shall eat **with it** unleavened bread,” ties in the eating of the lamb as part of the feast of unleavened bread. It also ties in the thought that eating the Passover lamb on the fifteenth day is memorializing the day they left Egypt, which was the **fifteenth** day.

Exodus 12:19 and Exodus 13:6,7 also bring out the same thought that their homes were to be free of leaven seven days, not eight. This is further evidence the Passover lamb was slain at 3 P.M. toward the end of Nisan 14, not at its beginning, and was then eaten on the fifteenth, as the meal on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

New Testament Antitype Corroboration

What was the last supper of Jesus? Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34, and Luke 23:44 all bring out that Jesus died on the cross the ninth hour (3 P.M. our time) on the fourteenth of Nisan. Thus Jesus died as the antitypical Passover lamb at the exact time the Israelites were to slay their typical Passover lamb. The gospel of John concurs with this thought, that at the time Jesus died they were killing their Pascal lambs —the ninth hour (3 P.M.) of the fourteenth.

This is also confirmed by the historian Josephus when, in referring to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in 69-70 A.D., he says: “So these high priests, upon the coming of their feast which is called the Passover, when they slay their sacrifices from the **ninth hour** to the eleventh, found the number of sacrifices was two hundred and fifty six thousand five hundred” (*Wars* 6, 9, 3).

A perplexing problem arises from other Scriptures in Matthew, Mark, and Luke which seem to imply that the last supper of Jesus was the Passover observance. They **all** refer to the fourteenth of Nisan as the “Day of Preparation.” It was the day all Israel prepared for the first day of the feast of unleavened bread which was the High Sabbath Day of the fifteenth.

The preparation started at the beginning of the fourteenth day with each household making an absolutely thorough search to rid the house of all leaven: “For seven days no

leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory” (Deuteronomy 16:2-4). Note the extreme penalty if there was any leaven left in their houses by the time the fifteenth day started: “Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; but on the first day ye **shall have** [past tense] put away leaven out of your houses; for whosoever eateth leavened bread, that soul shall be cut off from Israel” (Exodus 12:15, Leeser).

Another Jewish Translation, the *Stone Edition Tanach*, puts it this way: “For a seven-day period shall you eat matzos [unleavened bread], but on the previous day [the Preparation Day] you shall nullify the leaven from your homes.”

The preparation day of the fourteenth also included the obtaining of bitter herbs to eat with the Passover lamb, taking the lamb to the temple to be slain, then dressing and roasting the lamb. This was in preparation for the fifteenth day Feast of Unleavened Bread on which day the lamb would be eaten after 6 P.M. of the fourteenth.

So let us first establish from the book of John that the people of Israel did not eat their Passover meal until sometime **after** Jesus partook of the last supper.

“Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the Passover” (John 18:28). This is obviously **after** the last supper and the Jewish leaders had **not yet eaten the Passover**.

In John chapter 13 we are told the last supper was before the Feast of the Passover. John 13:1-29 (NAS), “Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that his hour had come that he should depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him ... (v. 21) Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray me ... (vvs. 25-29) Lord, who is it? Jesus therefore answered, That is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him. ... He took and gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot ... Jesus therefore said to him, what you do, do quickly. ... Now no one of those reclining at the table knew for what purpose he had said this to him. For some were supposing, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus was saying to him, Buy the things we have need of **for the feast**.” John tells us the last supper was before the feast of Passover. This is confirmed by some of the disciples thinking Jesus was telling Judas to go buy things for the Passover feast which was yet future for them and all Israel.

“Now it was the day of **preparation for the Passover**; it was about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, Behold, your King!” (John 19:14, NAS).

“The Jews therefore, because it was the **day of preparation**, so that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and [that] they might be taken away” (John 19:31, NAS).

“Therefore on account of the Jewish **day of preparation**, because the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there” (John 19:42, NAS).

Notice from these Scriptures that the last supper, Judas’ betrayal, Jesus’ trial and crucifixion, all occurred **before** Israel ate the Passover. These all occurred on the fourteenth, the day of preparation, the day when the Israelites made all the preparations to partake of the Passover. They cleansed out the leaven, bought bitter herbs, had the lamb slain at the temple (at 3 P.M.), then dressed and roasted it, all in preparation for the Feast of Unleavened Bread which would begin three hours after Jesus’ death on the beginning of the fifteenth.

Now, however, we need to harmonize this with other Scriptures which seem to say the last supper was the normal Passover meal. These are found in Matthew 26:17-21, Mark 14:12-18, and Luke 22:7-16. All three sets of accounts begin by referring to the time of the last supper as “The First day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.”

On first reading, these appear to contradict John’s account that plainly states that the “last supper” occurred **before** the feast of unleavened bread. However, Mark and Luke both add details that help to clarify the time. Mark says it was “the first day of unleavened bread when they killed the Passover.” Luke states it was “the day of unleavened bread when the Passover must be killed.” Also, Matthew 27:62, Mark 15:42, and Luke 23:54 all refer to that same day as the “Day of Preparation,” thus indicating they were all referring to the same day John called “the day of preparation,” when the Passover lamb was killed. Perhaps they initially used the phrase that it was the “first day of the feast” in a general way from the standpoint that the fourteenth was the day they had to make the preparations for the feast which began the following day.

Now let’s consider the details of the last supper in Luke’s gospel: “Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the Passover that we may eat. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples? And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready. And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the Passover. And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With **desire I have desired to eat this Passover** with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”—Luke 22:7-16

This appears to be saying the last supper was the Passover meal. But if this were the case, according to the Scriptures in John, they would be partaking of the Passover at the wrong time. They would be breaking the law, for it would be ahead of the proper time when all Israel partook of the Passover. But as we progress, we will see the reasons why we believe that Jesus’ last supper was **not** the Passover observance.

First, it was logical for Jesus to tell Peter and John to go to prepare for the Passover, for the fourteenth day of preparation began, and that is when the cleaning out of all leaven - began in every household in Israel. At the time, the disciples did not understand that Jesus would not be able to eat the Passover the next day because he would be dead, having been sacrificed as our Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7). But Jesus, instead of going into a detailed explanation of how he would be dead when the time came to eat the Passover, simply told Peter and John where to go to prepare for the upcoming Passover. Then later, after having made the preparations, we have the account of Jesus' last supper with his disciples when he instituted the memorial.

Second, notice that none of the four gospel writers make any mention about a lamb being eaten at the last supper. This is because the time had not yet come to slay the Passover lamb when Christ and his disciples ate their last meal together. And if the Passover lamb was to have been slain shortly after 6 P.M. at the **beginning** of the fourteenth day, why did Jesus wait until the fourteenth day had **already begun** before telling Peter and John to go to prepare the Passover? For there was so much that would have had to be done in preparation. They would have had to find the place, search for and remove all the leaven, purchase bitter herbs, take their lamb to the temple to have it slain, and then prepare and roast it before they could partake of the meal. (Recall that Josephus said that in 70 A.D. there were 256,500 Passover lambs the priests had to slay at the temple. Think of how much time it would have taken the priests to slay so many lambs.) The reason Jesus waited until the fourteenth began to tell them to **begin** preparing for the Passover is because they had the entire day before them to make all the preparations.

The third point to consider is how Paul described the time element of when the memorial took place: "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the [same] night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake [it], and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me" (1 Corinthians 11:23, 24). If the Lord wanted Paul to convey the time element of the memorial as being **after** the Passover meal, it would seem more specific and appropriate for him to say, "That the Lord Jesus after the Passover on the night he was betrayed, took bread ..." etc.

The fourth and perhaps most decisive reason we believe the last supper was not the Passover has to do with the phrase, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover." It may be reasoned that when he says, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover," that they were right then, either partaking of, or about to partake of the Passover. But this is not necessarily the case. The use of the word "this" does not always refer to an immediate event. It can refer to a nearby, upcoming event. For example we might say, "Where are you going this Thanksgiving Day?" The word "this" in this context obviously refers to an upcoming event, and not an event that is immediately taking place.

In addition, we find the Greek word for the phrase "with desire" is Strong's #1939, *epithumia*. Professor Strong defines it as "a longing (especially for what is forbidden)." This word is translated in the King James as "lust" thirty-one times out of the thirty-eight times it appears. Hence we can understand Strong's definition of "a longing especially for

what is forbidden.” But why would Jesus use this phrase relative to the Passover “as - having a longing for that which is forbidden” when there are several other Greek words Jesus could have used to express good desire, desire that is not forbidden?

Jesus truly would have liked to partake of the Passover one final time with his disciples, but he could not because in a sense it was forbidden, forbidden from the standpoint that he knew he would be dead. He knew he would become the antitypical Passover lamb, dying on the cross as a ransom for all mankind, at the exact time the Passover lambs of Israel were being killed at 3 P.M. the next afternoon.

We believe Ferrar Fenton accurately captures the meaning of Christ’s words in his translation of Luke 22:15,16. “And he said to them, ‘I have longingly desired to eat this [coming] Passover with you before My suffering; however, I tell you that **I shall not eat of it**, until it can be administered in the kingdom of God.’”

Thus, the last supper meal Jesus and his disciples ate together was not the Passover, but just a special fellowship meal. Jesus, knowing it would be his last night with his disciples, wanted to institute the memorial and teach them one final time.

We trust we have shown how all the Scriptures concerning the type and antitype of the Passover can be harmonized. May it strengthen our faith as we once again reflect on the great sacrifice of our Lord this memorial season. May we rejoice in the blessed privilege we have of partaking of the memorial, renewing our consecrations, and reflecting upon our brotherhood partaking throughout the world.

Passing Over the Red Sea

The Eleventh Plague, The Eleventh Miracle

It came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near. For God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt.—Exodus 13:17

Timothy Krupa

There were multiple routes leading out of Egypt to the east. The shortest route to Palestine passed through a fortified and highly guarded frontier. If Moses had led the Israelites on this most direct route to Canaan, and if they had encountered no resistance, the journey would have taken something like twelve days. But the reality was they would have encountered great military resistance. God knew that these people, who had been slaves for such a long time, were in no condition to fight the armies of the Philistines and Canaanites.

According to Jewish history an incident took place several years earlier that demonstrated their unpreparedness for military conflict. Quoting from Rabbi Jeffrey M. Cohen in his book *1001 Questions and Answers on Pesach*: “The Targum [an Aramaic Commentary] preserves another explanation of why they took a circuitous route. It relates that [a large band of] fully armed warriors of the tribe of Ephraim defied the will of God and fled Egypt thirty years before the time decreed for the Exodus. They attacked the Philistines at Gath, and were annihilated.”

Jehovah said in Exodus 23:29,30 that he intended that they take the Promised Land “by little and little.” This was to be after they had become strengthened in faith and had put the mentality and habits of slavery well behind them. Later, of course, the disobedience of the Israelites, and especially their poor reaction to the report of the twelve spies, caused God to have them wander for forty years before entering the Promised Land. Forty years to reach Canaan is a lot more than twelve days.

Direct Instructions

God told Moses exactly what route to take and he warned Moses that Pharaoh would pursue them (Exodus 14:1-4). Pharaoh recovered quickly enough from mourning the death of Egypt’s firstborn to mobilize his army. Exodus 14:7 says, “He [Pharaoh] took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them.” Josephus, in *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 2, Chapter 15, elaborates on this, saying Pharaoh pursued the Israelites with “six hundred chariots, with fifty thousand horsemen, and two hundred thousand footmen, all armed.”

Even if we discount the size of the army somewhat because of Josephus' reputation for enhancing numbers, what a terrifying sight this must have been for the unarmed former slaves. Absolutely terrifying. "They were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord" (Exodus 14:10).

The prescribed route led the Israelites seemingly into a box between two mountains. The Egyptians were on the third side and the Red Sea was to their backs. They were trapped. "And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians?" (Exodus 14:11,12).

This reaction of the Israelites was so hysterical that it actually provoked God. They forgot all the miracles that had been performed on their behalf. Later Jewish writers characterized their reaction as a rebellion: "Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red Sea" (Psalm 106:7). They had been free only a few days and they were ready to return to slavery.

Moses Predicts Deliverance and the Demise of Egypt

"Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD ... The Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more forever" (Exodus 14:13). Moses' statement was probably not understood by the Israelites, but he was promising that something dramatic would extricate Israel from this seemingly hopeless situation.

The angel who was leading the host of the Israelites was manifested in a pillar of a cloud. When the multitude reached the roadblock at the Red Sea, the angel moved from the leading position to one in the rear of the company, a position of protection between the Israelites and the Egyptian army: "And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night" (Exodus 14:20).

Jewish rabbis and historians say the records show that six days transpired from the time the Israelites left Egypt until they reached the shores of the Red Sea and that the climax - occurred on the seventh day.

Most of the action took place during the night. Verse 20 says the cloudy pillar separated the two camps during the night. Verse 21 says a strong east wind blew all that night. Verse 24 says that in the "morning watch" they could see the "Egyptian army through the pillar of fire and cloud." Josephus adds to the description: "Showers of rain also came down from the sky, and dreadful thunders and lightning, with flashes of fire. Thunderbolts also were darted upon them. Nor was there any thing which used to be sent by God upon men as indications of his wrath which did not happen at this time, for a dark and dismal night oppressed them."—*Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 2, Chapter 16.

But the great miracle was now transpiring. In the midst of all the “natural” phenomena of lightning, rain, and wind, on the other side of the cloudy pillar the children of Israel were passing over the sea bed upon dry ground (Exodus 14:22).

The unsuspecting Egyptians raced after them and headed for total destruction. When the “natural” forces of God descended upon them, they realized too late that they once again faced the power and might of the God of Israel: “The Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians” (v. 25).

It was perfectly clear to the Egyptians that the Lord was fighting for Israel. It was not that they had no understanding of what or why this was happening. When God finally destroys the forces of evil that still control this present evil world, that destruction will not be a mystery either. It will be perfectly clear.

Moses Acts

Just as the sea parted when Moses stretched forth his hand, the sea came back together when the Lord told Moses to stretch out his hand a second time. This was not a series of events that took place randomly depending upon weather conditions. The Lord decided, Moses is told to take action, and it happened. The elements are totally under God’s control. What resulted was the total destruction of the armed forces of Egypt. Total annihilation. Every last one of the Egyptian army was destroyed.

The Israelites saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore: “And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses” (Exodus 14:31). And they said, “The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father’s God, and I will exalt him” (Exodus 15:2).

They Were Baptized Into Moses

The apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:1,2, says that for the Israelites, crossing the Red Sea was a baptism into Moses. He must have meant that because Moses was their new leader and the savior of all of them, they were now committed, almost obligated, to living a life like Moses, doing as he commanded, and going where he would lead them. It seems that Paul liked the expression “a baptism into...” because he used it multiple times. The church is baptized into Christ. It is baptized into his death, baptized into one body, baptized into putting on Christ, baptized into his burial. From the point of our baptism into Christ we are likewise committed to Christ, to living like Christ, to doing as he commands and committed to going where he leads (Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:12).

The apostle Paul makes a good point, the parallel is clear, and we take the lesson seriously regarding our personal baptism into Christ. However, the story of passing over the Red Sea, when looked at as a total picture, is not about the passing over of the

“firstborn”; it is a larger picture of the passing over of the entire company of God’s people.

Notice there is no mention of the “firstborn” in this account. The firstborn pass through the Red Sea experience commingled with the entire nation. The firstborn were not separated for service until some time later, just before the wilderness experience. “The coming through the Red Sea shows the ultimate deliverance of the entire world of mankind” (C. T. Russell, Convention Report Sermons, *Expanded Biblical Comments*, Hebrews 11:29).

What did the baptism into Moses do for the Israelites? Much like what baptism into Christ does for us. It brought them into relationship with God by canceling past sins, and also brought them certain graces or favors from God. Despite their enthusiasm and rejoicing when they completed the “passing over” and the “baptism,” it was only a matter of days until the flesh once again reigned supreme.

Lessons for Us

God’s Incredible Power to Save. Perhaps the most obvious lesson is the demonstration of God’s incredible power and desire to save his people. The nation of Israel was helpless in the face of her enemies just as the world of mankind is helpless to extricate itself from the morass of this present evil world. It took God’s almighty power to deliver his people at the Red Sea and it will take the same power to destroy the present order of things and institute a new order.

God’s Enemies. Another important lesson from this account is what happens to the enemies of God’s people and how it happens. Think of what would have happened if the hosts of Pharaoh and Pharaoh himself were allowed to remain alive, standing on the western shore of the Red Sea. If they had survived this experience, they would have lived to fight another day and never ceased in their efforts to destroy and control God’s people. It would have been a constantly repeating scenario of chasing and trying to escape. So, we see that the complete destruction of Pharaoh and his legions is perhaps the key feature of this event. Pharaoh and every soldier he had were completely destroyed. They were gone, never again to harass God’s people.

So it will be in God’s coming kingdom. Eventually Satan will be destroyed, all of his legions will be destroyed, and that’s when the people of God, all who are willing to learn his ways, will pass over from sin and death and rejoice and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb.

Who Fights and Who Does Not Fight. It is quite interesting to consider how these enemies of God’s people were actually destroyed. God’s people play a passive role. They don’t fight, they don’t have swords in their hands. They are not the active agents of the destroying force. It might be said that they are marching ahead, virtually fleeing from the enemy. We conclude that the victory over the powers of evil, which we expect in the near future, will not be accomplished by God’s people having the largest and best army on the

face of the earth. The victory will not be accomplished by human, mortal combat with the powers of evil. Satan and his hosts will be overcome by God's power and God's weapons.

This fits well with the end-time scenario described as taking place in the valley of Jehoshaphat. In Joel 3:2 the prophet says that Jehovah will gather all nations to this valley. In verse 12 Jehovah continues, saying "Let the heathen ... come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about." Verse 14: "Multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near."

In Jehoshaphat's day, Jehovah delivered his people from a great invading army without the people raising one sword to defend themselves. As the enemy approached, King Jehoshaphat spoke to the people, much like Moses did on the banks of the Red Sea: "Believe in the Lord your God" (2 Chronicles 20:20). The Israelites went out toward the battlefield singing songs of praise; they found the enemy had already been destroyed by Jehovah. In both of the end-time pictures, "the battle is not yours, but God's" (2 Chronicles 20:15).

Rebellion of Some of God's People. We should not pass lightly over the fact that the Israelites, despite all that God did for them, were a rebellious and stiff-necked people. Many of them had to be destroyed for their constant provoking of Jehovah. All who are seriously striving to be the "spiritual Israel" of God need to carefully examine each thought and motive for an act or word which would likewise "provoke" God.

Those who desire to be "baptized into Christ" must become committed, virtually obligated, to living a life like Christ, doing as he commanded, and going where he would lead them. As the apostle Paul expressed it, we must be baptized into his death, baptized into one body, baptized into putting on Christ, baptized into his burial. This leaves little or no time for the things left behind in Egypt.

Events Were Clearly Predicted

None of the events of the "passing over of the Red Sea" should have come as a surprise to the Israelites. God had clearly informed Moses of all that was about to happen and Moses, in turn, had clearly informed the Israelites of the events that were ahead. So it is with us. We have adequate knowledge of the events that lie before us. We should understand the implications of the prophecies about to be fulfilled and it should be clear to us what personal experiences, what near death experiences, we will be undergoing. And it should be just as clear, when these events unfold, that God's providences and overruling powers are supreme. What a glorious prospect!

This great story of the "passing over of the Red Sea" spread far and wide. Some forty years later, when the two spies were scouting the city of Jericho, Rahab told them: "We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt" (Joshua 2:10). Likewise the true story of God's power to save all the willing and obedient will some day spread far and wide.

God's enemies will surely be destroyed. Another event similar to the passing over of the Red Sea occurred almost nine hundred years previous. It too involved water, massive quantities of water. It too involved the saving of God's people (Noah and his family) and likewise it destroyed all of the wicked (Genesis 7, 8). In the flood we also see that it was not Noah and his family who destroyed the wicked. Noah simply did as the Lord instructed. He built the ark, saved his family, and the animals. God closed the ark door and then proceeded to destroy the wicked.

Never to be Forgotten!

Many years before the exodus, Joseph predicted that God would take his people back to the promised land, and Joseph requested that his bones be taken with them when that happened: "And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you" (Exodus 13:19).

This is one of the most touching parts of the story. First, it shows Joseph's heart condition that he did not want to be buried in Egypt, even though that is where he saved God's people and even though his wife was Egyptian. Second, it was admirable that Moses and probably Joseph's family, the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, remembered Joseph's request.

Sometimes we see Joseph as a picture of our Lord Jesus; to whatever extent the picture shows our journey, Jesus' sacrifice will never be forgotten. We, and soon the entire world of mankind, will carry forever the memory of our Lord's life and his life's work on behalf of all of us (1 John 2:2).

Likewise, the passing of the Red Sea has been told for centuries and it will continue to be told again and again in the ages to come. It is one of the most dramatic incidents of God saving his people. As the Israelites were making the crossing, the towers of water on each side, the dry sand beneath their feet, the protecting pillar of fire and cloud insured their safe passage. It was all a picture of the days of transition as God establishes his heavenly and earthly kingdom. We are now living in the time when much of this will literally be fulfilled on a larger scale than even the Red Sea.

So let us embrace the baptism in Christ and apply the words of Moses to ourselves: "Stand still, and see the salvation of Jehovah."

The Passover Renewed

Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan.
—Joshua 1:11

David Rice

For forty years Israel wandered in the wilderness. The original Passover, when the Israelites ate the lamb with staff in hand and prepared for a journey, commemorated their departure from Egypt on the fifteenth of Nisan. After one year of journeying, the Israelites observed their second Passover in the wilderness, killing their lambs on the fourteenth of Nisan “between the two evenings” and consuming it that night (Numbers 9:1-3). Perhaps the Israelites maintained the custom for the remainder of their sojourn, but this is uncertain. Exodus 12:48 says “no uncircumcised person shall eat [the Passover],” and the Israelites born in the wilderness were not circumcised.

As the forty years ended, the approaching Passover was to be special in two prominent ways:

1. The whole ceremony would be kept in the promised land across the Jordan River. The first feature of Passover was selecting the lamb, and this was to be done on the tenth of Nisan (Exodus 12:3). That day coincided with the very day the Israelites entered the land westward across the Jordan: “And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month” (Joshua 4:19).
2. The Israelite males would be circumcised for the first time since they left Egypt: “Now all the people that came out were circumcised: but all the people that were born in the wilderness ... they had not circumcised” (Joshua 5:5). “And Joshua made him sharp knives [flints], and circumcised the children of Israel” (Joshua 5:3). This act represented the “rolling back” of the affliction, evils, and disobedience of the Israelites associated with Egypt and their flight. “Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal [rolling] unto this day” (Joshua 5:9).

The Passover in Egypt represented the blessings of Christ’s sacrifice during the Gospel age to the church, when those of the firstborn class are under the blood. The Passover in Canaan, by contrast, represented the blessings of Christ’s sacrifice during the kingdom to the world. After forty years of wandering (the Gospel age), the blessing of mankind in the kingdom follows. The circumcision of the host represents that the world in the kingdom will receive circumcision in their hearts from the uncleanness of their former association with sin and death. As Moses in the wilderness represented Christ during the Gospel age, Joshua in this experience represented Christ during the kingdom.

The Broad Picture

Even before crossing the Jordan, some of the Israelites had received their inheritance while Moses still lived. These were Reuben, Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh—the latter tribe had half of their allotment on each side of the Jordan. If the crossing of Jordan

represents their redemption from the curse, then the settling of these tribes on the eastern side of Jordan has been supposed, by some, to represent an inheritance by those whose trials have already passed before the world is brought into the kingdom. In this picture the firstborn, Reuben, evidently is a picture of the saints, and the remaining tribe Gad, whose name means “a troop” (Genesis 30:11, margin) evidently pictures the Great Company. Manasseh, whose inheritance laps both sides of the Jordan, represents a class which connects the eastern and western parts of Israel. The class which “connects” the spiritual with the earthly is the Ancient Worthy class. These will be the “liaison” between heaven and earth, receiving instructions from the spiritual phase of the kingdom and implementing them for the benefit of the earthly phase of the kingdom.

The Jordan River

The word “Jordan” means “descender” (Strong’s #3383) and symbolizes the downward course of mankind into death. Its identification with “death” is why Jesus was baptized in the Jordan, though in this case his death was sacrificial, Jesus giving his life to redeem the race of Adam under the curse.

The crossing of the Jordan by the Israelites represents the rolling back of the curse of death which Jesus died to effect. The episode is described in Joshua 3:14-17. The waters of Jordan were stopped, evidently by a landslide further upriver, “a great distance away, at a town called Adam in the vicinity of Zarethan” (verse 16, NIV). The mention of “Adam” reminds us of the source of the curse, the fall of Adam. “Zarethan” evidently is derived from an old root meaning “pierce, puncture” (compare Strong’s #6891 and #6868), perhaps suggesting the injury received through transgression. Or perhaps Adam and Zarethan, “to show blood” (compare Strong’s #119, #120, #121), and “pierce,” refer to the death of our redeemer. In either event the rolling back of the waters of Jordan are identified symbolically with the rolling back of the curse.

Two Thousand Cubits

Joshua sent officers through the host to advise them of the procedure for crossing the Jordan. The priests would bear the Ark of the Covenant in advance of the Israelites who would follow at a respectful distance of two thousand cubits (Joshua 3:2-4). Probably this shows that before the world crosses into the kingdom, the priests, the church class during the Gospel age, lead the way. The two thousand cubit distance represents the Gospel age, not by showing a number of years to pass from our Lord’s day until the kingdom (even though it is a close approximation), but by using a number that represents the age of the spirit—the Gospel age.

Two, as a number in the Scriptures, represents the holy spirit. Probably this is because the reservoir of the holy spirit—the Bible—comes to us in two parts, the Old and New Testaments. Zechariah chapter 4 represents these as two olive trees which empty their precious oil (a figure of the holy spirit) through golden pipes into a bowl which feeds seven lamps to bring enlightenment. So the oil of the holy spirit which provides

enlightenment for the seven stages of the church is contained in these two parts of the Scriptures.

These two parts are elsewhere represented by the two stacks of shewbread in the holy, the two swords our Lord asked the disciples to bring as he was ready to leave them (Luke 22:38), the two witnesses of Revelation 11:3 which prophesied in mourning for the 1,260 years of Papal power, and the two candlesticks “standing before the God of the earth” in Revelation 11:4. Notice the intimate symbolic connection between the “spirit” and the truth in Hebrews 4:12 and Ephesians 6:17. In the first text the “word of God” is contrasted with a “two-edged sword”; in the second Paul speaks of the “sword of the spirit which is the word of God.” (See *Marshall's Diaglott* which explains that “which” is in the neuter gender to agree with “spirit,” not feminine to agree with “sword.” In other words Paul is saying the “spirit ... is the word of God.”)

Thus the age of the spirit, when the church is called out of the world through the holy spirit of God calling us through the truth, is represented in the Joshua passage by two thousand cubits. In John 21:8 the same is represented by “two hundred cubits,” in Judges by the “twenty years” of Samson’s judgeship (Judges 16:31), and in the parable of the Good Samaritan by the “two pence” to care for the injured man while the good Samaritan (our Lord) was away (Luke 10:34, 35).

As the priests entered the Jordan and “the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water” (Joshua 3:15), the waters flowing from above receded and stopped. So the rolling back of the curse imposed upon Adam began with the blessed redemption of the saints at the beginning of the Gospel age. As the host of Israel followed two thousand cubits “later,” so the world will follow the saints through the way opened by our Lord’s sacrifice into the blessings of the kingdom. Then they will observe Passover in the kingdom as we have observed Passover during the Gospel age.

The Absence of Manna

Another way to indicate the change of ages in this episode is the cessation of the manna which had sustained the Israelites for forty years in the wilderness. The manna represented the nourishment of the church during the Gospel age. When it first appeared, its taste was described as like “wafers made with honey” (Exodus 16:31). In Leviticus 8:26, 27 three bread items were to be waved before the Lord in the service consecrating the priests —unleavened bread (justification), oiled bread (sanctifying influence of the holy spirit), and a wafer which is generally identified with our hope of glorification. “A wafer represented our hope and faith in the exceeding precious promises of glory, honor, and immortality” (*Tabernacle Shadows*, p. 46). Thus the connection of manna to wafers supports the view that the manna pictured the spiritual nourishment for the saints of the heavenly calling.

“Honey” is also associated with the heavenly call of the saints—the sweet, wonderful, lofty nature of our heavenly prospects. Thus the pleasant words of life we have received “are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones” (Proverbs 16:24;

Revelation 10:9). This precious inheritance we never sacrifice, as the Israelites were commanded never to offer honey upon the altar (Leviticus 2:11). When Samson proposed his riddle—“out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness” (Judges 14:14)—it was about a slain lion which represented the “lion of the tribe of Juda” (Revelation 5:5) from which we receive not only justification, but the sweet call to heavenly glory.

When the Israelites tired of the manna, they forgot its honey-like taste and compared it simply to “fresh oil” (Numbers 11:8). So we may sometimes forget the grand and glorious hope we have amidst the mundane experiences of life. We may still recognize our daily manna as of the spirit, like fresh oil, but lose our hold on the wonder of it all. At such times not only should we “stop to smell the roses” (compare Song of Solomon 2:1), but we should stop to taste the honey (Song of Solomon 4:11).

But this heavenly call, this taste of wafers made with honey, is only for the present call of the saints. When the world is redeemed from the curse, they will have wonderful things in store for them, but this privilege of the heavenly call will cease. It is only for the saints. After the Israelites had killed their Passover lambs on the fourteenth of Nisan and eaten them that night, the following day the manna ceased (Joshua 5:10-12). When the world is redeemed, the heavenly call ends.

The Count of Days

The book of Joshua opens with God’s exhortation to Joshua to be strong and courageous in his leadership, and the assurance that God would bless and sustain him. The first nine verses are thus employed, and verse 10 begins the narrative of the advance. He commanded the officers to advise the people to prepare food sufficient for the next few days, “for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan” (Joshua 1:11). Evidently this does not mean they actually crossed the river on the third day from this command for that would violate the succeeding narrative (Joshua 3:1,2). It means that on the third day they would advance from their present encampment westward to the banks of the Jordan in preparation for the crossing.

The Israelites at the time were “pitched by Jordan, from Bethjesimoth even unto Abelshittim [which means the plains of Shittim] in the plains of Moab” (Numbers 33:49). They were “by Jordan” but not at its brink. Here they prepared for a move on the third day.

Meanwhile Joshua sent two spies “out of Shittim” into Jericho, where they learned the people of the land were fearful: “We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man” (Joshua 2:10,11).

Rahab did not mention the drying of the Jordan because that had not yet occurred. The spies evidently made their way to the home of Rahab the same day they entered Jericho, and that night were lowered over the wall to seek refuge in the mountains until the third day (Joshua 2:16,22). Perhaps that third day coincides with the last of the three days of Joshua 1:11 when the Israelites were moving from Shittim to the east bank of Jordan.

Joshua 3:1 speaks of the morning of the day the camp moved: “Joshua rose early in the morning” of that third day. Possibly this is a reminder that the greater Joshua, our Lord Jesus, rose early the morning of the third day, foreshadowing his body members rising on the third millennium from Jesus’ day.

Joshua 3:2 refers to another three days, perhaps symbolic of the same three millenniums: “And it came to pass after three days [the Hebrew idiom means on the third day] that the officers went through the host” to explain to the Israelites what was to happen the following day (Joshua 3:5). That would put the crossing of the Jordan on the fourth day since their arrival at the east bank, counting inclusively.

Joshua would be magnified in the sight of the people, through the crossing over Jordan. “And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee” (Joshua 3:7). So will the world come to recognize their leader Jesus, represented in Joshua, just as we recognize our leader Jesus, represented in Moses.

The Passover of Hezekiah

In every work that he began in the service of the house of God ... and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered.

—2 Chronicles 31:21

Tom Ruggirello

The Passover instituted by Hezekiah in 2 Chronicles 30 was part of the larger reformation work he undertook after becoming king of Israel. It is an inspiring story of how the faith of one man can affect the course of an entire nation. There were three kings of Israel who were especially pleasing to God. Along with David and Josiah, Hezekiah had a profoundly good effect on his fellow Israelites.

His case is especially interesting because of his family background. His father Ahaz was a wicked king who led the two-tribe kingdom of Judah into idolatry. For Hezekiah to have such zeal for the Lord may indicate the influence of a godly mother. In fact, when introduced to Hezekiah in 2 Chronicles 29:1, we are told his mother's name was Abijah. It is somewhat unusual to have the mother's name given in this way. It may be an indication of her faithful tutoring of Hezekiah. If that is the case, we see that the goodness of Hezekiah was achieved through the wise preparation of a parent. It is a lesson for all Christian parents: their influence can make a tremendous difference in the lives of their children.

It is thrilling to see young king Hezekiah immediately set out to restore the worship of God in Israel. It was in the first month of his reign that he opened the doors of the temple and repaired them (2 Chronicles 29:3). Immediately he gathered the priests and Levites together and admonished them to return to the ways of the Lord (verses 4-11). It took sixteen days to remove out of the temple all the filthiness that his father Ahaz had put there (verse 17). As part of the reformation work he desired to make a covenant with God so that his fierce wrath would turn away from Israel.

Passover Reformation

All this reformation work took place just preceding the time of the Passover. There was one difficulty however in keeping the Passover. So much work had to be done that when the fifteenth of Nisan, the appointed day of Passover arrived, the priests had not been sufficiently cleansed. Additionally, they had all been so involved in the cleansing work there had not been adequate time to gather the people to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover.

After consulting with the princes of Judah, Hezekiah determined that the law allowed postponement of the Passover until the following month. In issuing the decree that Passover would be celebrated one month later, Hezekiah also sent letters to the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel in the north, inviting them to the Passover celebration (2 Chronicles 30:6-9). There was a mixed response to his letter. Some accepted the invitation and came to Jerusalem, while others laughed and mocked it (verses 10 and 11).

Apparently, those from the north had not been properly cleansed but partook of the Passover feast anyway. This was of great concern to Hezekiah and he prayed to God for their forgiveness. Not only was Hezekiah determined to lead Israel back to God, he was also determined that it be done in the correct manner. His desire to include his northern brethren is impressive. The rift between Israel and Judah had widened considerably over the previous two hundred fifty years. During the reign of his father Ahaz, the northern tribes had even joined a confederacy against Judah. This led to war between fellow Israelites. In one instance 120,000 men were slaughtered in Judah (2 Chronicles 28:6). Because this happened at the death of Ahaz, undoubtedly Hezekiah was a witness to the terrible event.

How easily he could have harbored bitterness toward his northern brethren. But his attitude was the opposite. We see his genuine desire to bring the northern kingdom back to God along with Judah. Long before Jesus uttered one of his precious admonitions, we see it being carried out by this young king: “Do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you” (Matthew 5:44). We see in Hezekiah the example of caring for the spiritual welfare of others, even his enemies.

The seven-day Passover celebration was such a blessing that those assembled at Jerusalem agreed to keep a second seven-day feast (2 Chronicles 30:23). Describing the atmosphere which prevailed in Jerusalem at the time, we read “there was great joy in Jerusalem: for since the time of Solomon ... there was not the like in Jerusalem” (v. 26). How thrilling to see Israel feeling such joy for the celebration of the Passover. It is clear the celebration was pleasing even to God for “their prayer came up to his holy dwelling place, even unto heaven” (v. 27).

The purpose of the Passover was accomplished. It instilled in the people an appreciation for their nation’s past deliverance from Egyptian bondage. The Lord knew gratitude for past experiences is the basis for an ongoing thankfulness in the heart of people. The Lord’s people cannot overlook that lesson today. It is only as we reflect upon our past experiences with the Lord and are truly grateful for them, that we can move ahead with thankful hearts.

A Symbol of the Kingdom

This entire experience of Hezekiah is symbolic of the kingdom work to be performed by the Ancient Worthies. Hezekiah’s desire to make a covenant with the Lord well illustrates the making of the New Covenant through the Ancient Worthies. Hezekiah wanted to make (or renew) the Law Covenant to turn the wrath of God away from Israel. This is similar to the events at the end of the Gospel age when Israel’s punishment ends and she is ushered back into the favor of God. An essential element to this process will be the inauguration of the New Covenant.

The fact that Israel celebrated the Passover one month later than usual shows this is a picture of a celebration that follows the Gospel age. As the world accepts Christ they will come to understand his role as the Lamb of God. They will see the manner in which the

spiritual firstborns were delivered during the Gospel age. They will come to treasure the knowledge of their own deliverance through the blood of the lamb, just as the nation of Israel had been delivered from Egypt, after the firstborns were saved from death.

A second week of feasting was observed in Israel. How appropriate this is when connected to the world's abundant appreciation of God's deliverance. The "great joy in Jerusalem" was but a foretaste of the joy mankind will come to know when all the families of the earth come together under their deliverer. Hezekiah's desire to unite all Israel aptly portrays the work of the Ancient Worthies in bringing warring factions of the world together: Arabs loving Jews, whites loving blacks, and all races worshipping God, united under Christ. What a thrilling scenario this is. But in spite of the positive aspects of this picture, some laughed and mocked Hezekiah's work. Similarly, there will be some who will not accept the regulations of the kingdom.

Because of Hezekiah's work, the people tore down their idols. This is a marvelous foregleam of the time when mankind will tear down all contemporary forms of idolatry.

The Uncleansed

Some of the northern Israelites celebrated the feast of Passover but had not been properly cleansed. As Hezekiah prayed for them we see another aspect of the role to be played by the Ancient Worthies. Some in the kingdom will desire to worship God, but their form of worship will be so distorted that they will make mistakes in the way they approach him. The Ancient Worthies will teach them the legality of their forgiveness, and how the mediator operates during that age. God forgave a violation of the law with these particular Israelites. His forgiveness shows that even in the exactness of the law, heart intent was considered. That will be the spirit in the kingdom. Heart intent will take precedence over exactness of procedure.

In 2 Chronicles 31:4 we see a picture of the world's change of heart. Hezekiah commanded the people to start giving their tithes again so the work of the priesthood could proceed. As soon as the command was broadcast an abundance of corn, wine, oil, and honey came in as well as tithes of sheep and oxen. Rotherham describes it as "heaps, heaps" (verse 6). The word "heaps" is mentioned twice with emphasis on both words. So many tithes came in that additional storehouses were needed. What a picture of free will offering this conveys. It depicts how generous the human spirit will become. Hearts full of appreciation will fill the world; the result will be faithful worship of God.

As Israel was wrapped in the care and wisdom of a faithful king, so the Ancient Worthies, under the administration of the great mediator, will lead mankind to a faithful service of God. The blood of the lamb will become a vital part of mankind's understanding and devotion, and they will walk in the ways of righteousness for all ages to come.

The Passover of Josiah

It Is a Fearful Thing

*Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord.
And again, The Lord shall judge his people.—Hebrews 10:30*

Richard Evans

Following the reign of “good” King Hezekiah, Judah, the southern kingdom of Israel, suffered through the leadership of two very evil kings, Manasseh and Amon.

“Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. ... And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, after the abominations of the heathen” (2 Kings 21:1,2).

“Amon was twenty and two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. ... And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh did. And he walked in all the way that his father walked in, and served the idols that his father served, and worshipped them: And he forsook the LORD God of his fathers [Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David], and walked not in the way of the LORD. And the servants of Amon conspired against him, and slew the king in his own house” (2 Kings 21:19-23).

Josiah’s Reign

The assassination of Amon precipitously placed his son Josiah on the throne of Judah at a very early age: “Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. ... And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left” (2 Kings 22:1,2).

Charles Dickens opened his classic work on the French Revolution, *A Tale of Two Cities*, with these oft-quoted words: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way.”

A more apt description of King Josiah’s reign, Judah’s last “good” king, would be difficult to phrase. Though both his father and grandfather were worshippers of gods (Baal) and goddesses (Ashtoreth), Josiah did not follow in their footsteps. No reason is given for his taking the “way of David,” the path followed by his great grandfather Hezekiah; but, whatever the reason, he “turned not aside.” The people of Judah, on the other hand, were “going direct the other way.” “For in the eighth year of his reign, while

he [Josiah] was yet young [sixteen], he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images” (2 Chronicles 34:3).

The extent of the depravity then present in Judah, even to the offering of children to the fire of Moloch, was explicitly documented by the prophets Zephaniah and Jeremiah (Zephaniah 1:1-6; Jeremiah 1:1,2; 3:6-10).

At the age of twenty, four years after beginning to “seek after” God, Josiah began a great work of purging—removing from Judah the venues and priests involved with the worship of false gods. The cleansing was carried out over a period of years and was personally supervised by the king. Subsequent events revealed the reform was opposed by the dead weight of national apathy. The worship of idols had many fascinations as well as significant rewards for the ones involved (deference if not veneration, financial gain, etc.).

The Book of the Law

At twenty-six, in the eighteenth year of his reign, Josiah initiated an even more consequential work—the repair of the “House of the LORD” (2 Chronicles 34:8-13). It seems Solomon’s temple had received little maintenance from the time of Joash (Jehoash), a period of over two-and-a-half centuries. Though cleansed by Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 29:3-19), much of the silver and gold was later removed to placate Sennacherib, king of Assyria (2 Kings 18:13-16). Thus, even with all the abominations related with idolatry removed, the temple was in a sad state and needed much repair.

As the work began, the high priest Hilkiah found “the Book of the Law,” the Torah, apparently while emptying the box kept in the temple to collect money to pay for such work: “And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiah the priest found a [the¹] book of the law of the LORD given by Moses” (2 Chronicles 34:14).

“And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it” (2 Kings 22:8). The box was probably the one the High Priest Jehoiada had placed “beside the altar” during the reign of Joash (2 Kings 12:9).

Hilkiah’s declaration that he had found “the book” indicates it could well have been the original, the one Moses wrote and placed by “the side of the ark of the covenant” (Deuteronomy 31:24-26). During the years of desecration the book could have been placed inside the contribution box by a conscientious priest for safety or, more likely, by an idolatrous priest to remove it from sight. The book was not alone in its dislocation. Apparently the ark also had been taken from its divinely appointed place (2 Chronicles 35:3).

Entrusted by Hilkiah with his exceptional find, Shaphan, the king's secretary, took it to Josiah. After reporting on the progress of the repair work, he read the book to the king. This would have taken the whole of a long day.

Josiah's Response

The Lament. “And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the law, that he rent his clothes. And the king commanded ... Go, inquire of the LORD for me, and for them that are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found: for great is the wrath of the LORD that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do after all that is written in this book” (2 Chronicles 34:19-21). Josiah's lament was for the northern kingdom as well as the southern, both houses of Israel.

The king's reaction to the reading of “the Book of the Law” strongly suggests it was the first time he had heard the words. No doubt the book had been set aside early in the reign of Manasseh which meant it had not been read for up to seven decades (Manasseh, 55 years; Amon, 2 years; Josiah, 18 years). Thus, there were two generations which had probably never heard “the words of the law”—particularly, the curses that would accrue through disobedience. It was the curses that were the source of Josiah's lament. He immediately grasped the consequence for his people, a comprehension Paul was to set forth incisively many centuries later: “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:31).

Moses described that consequence as “seven times more plagues,” and through Joshua had the awesome specifics read aloud in very dramatic fashion on Mount Ebal (Leviticus 26:14-39; Deuteronomy 27:11-13; Joshua 8:30-35).

The Prophetess. To “enquire of the LORD” as the king commanded, the prophetess Huldah was consulted. Many reasons have been suggested for the prophetess being sought out and not Jeremiah or Zephaniah. The answer may be as simple as Huldah was in Jerusalem, the others were not.

In her response Huldah indicated Josiah's lament was well founded. It was indeed a fearful thing to be unfaithful in a relationship with God! “And she [Huldah] said unto them [Josiah's emissaries] ... Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place [Judah], and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read: Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched” (2 Kings 22:15-17).

The Covenant. Josiah's humble, wholehearted reaction and forthright response to what he had heard was profound. He not only put away what was wrong (2 Kings 23:4-20), but, following the guidance of God's written Word, he proceeded to introduce what was right (2 Kings 23:1-3). First, just as Moses had instructed Joshua centuries earlier, he

gathered the people so they too could hear the words of the book and reaffirm their covenant with God: “And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites, and all the people, great and small: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the LORD. And the king stood in his place, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD. And he caused all that were present ... to stand to it” (2 Chronicles 34:30-32).

A prophecy by Jeremiah during the later reign of Zedekiah describes an intriguing detail that may have been a part of the resplendent and unparalleled ceremony by which Josiah had Judah reaffirm its covenant: “And I will give the men that have transgressed my covenant, which have not performed the words of the covenant which they had made before me, when they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts thereof, the princes of Judah, and the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, and the priests, and all the people of the land, which passed between the parts of the calf; I will even give them into the hand of their enemies” (Jeremiah 34:18-20).

The Passover. Following reaffirmation of its covenant with God, Josiah caused the nation to keep Passover: “Moreover Josiah kept a Passover unto the LORD in Jerusalem: and they killed the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month. ... And the children of Israel that were present kept the Passover at that time, and the feast of unleavened bread seven days. And there was no Passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a Passover as Josiah kept” (2 Chronicles 35:1,17,18).

The Faith. In his zeal Josiah continued the purging of the land of all its venues for idol worship, even extending into Samaria (2 Kings 23:15-20)—the northern kingdom, the desolated land of the ten-tribe nation whose unfaithful people had been taken captive by Assyria.

His action at Bethel—the northern kingdom venue built by Jeroboam as an alternative to the temple in Jerusalem—gave a striking illustration of the depth of Josiah’s commitment and his desire to faithfully serve his God. He had the bones of the idolatrous priests removed from their sepulchres and then burned upon the idol altars before they were overturned. Though unexampled in Jewish history, Josiah obediently followed the instruction given by an unnamed “man of God” over three centuries earlier: “And he [the man of God] cried against the altar [of Jeroboam] in the word of the LORD, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men’s bones shall be burnt upon thee” (1 Kings 13:2).

In his faith Josiah executed all that the “man of God” had foretold (2 Kings 23:15,16). Judah’s last “good” king is a sublime example of a “righteous” man. “The just [righteous] shall live by [out of] his faith” (Habakkuk 2:4).

Josiah's Demise and Legacy

As God had promised Josiah through Huldah, the King's life came to an end before the judgment of the "living God" came on Judah (2 Kings 22:20). "In his days Pharaoh-nechoh king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates: and king Josiah went against him; and he slew him at Megiddo, when he had seen him" (2 Kings 23:29).

The reign of Louis XVI delayed for a short time the terror of the French Revolution, the certain consequence of the acts of preceding kings. In the same manner Josiah's reign was like the alpine glow of a setting sun on a snow covered mountain just before the fall of night. He had many obstacles to overcome: his grandfather's long reign of wickedness, the evil of his father and his brutal assassination, the lack of awareness of the Torah, the disrepair and desecration of the temple, and most harrowing, the corruption and perversion of the people. Although his efforts removed the outward appendages of idolatry, the people generally did not enter into the way of their God. Following his death Judah quickly returned to its false gods.

Before its certain end arrived, three of Josiah's sons and one grandson ruled as kings over Judah. None followed in the path of Josiah. They all did "evil in the sight of the LORD" (2 Kings 23:32,37; 24:9,19). Idolatry was so deeply ingrained in the psyche of the people that when Jeremiah challenged survivors of the resultant incursion by Babylon, they brazenly answered back with insolence: "As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the LORD, we will not hearken unto thee. But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil. But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine" (Jeremiah 44:16-18).

The Righteous Live out of Faith

The Word of God. The effect the Book of the Law had on Josiah is dramatic confirmation of Paul's insight concerning God's Word: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword ... a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

The difference between one who is illuminated by the free use of Scripture and one who turns to the teaching of fellow creatures is as day is to night. As vividly portrayed by Judah's failure, when God's Word is laid aside, the people are led astray by all kinds of error. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16).

A Passover Unlike Any Other. The Passover of Josiah provides uncompromising guidance for all who accept Christ as their Passover. The King did all he could to purge Judah of the physical elements of false worship, and he gave the people a Passover unlike any that had come before; however, he could not purge the “old leaven” from their hearts, a purging that all “in Christ” must do. “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” (1 Corinthians 5:7).

Upon hearing the Word of God Josiah believed and dedicated himself to follow and to do all that God had spoken (2 Chronicles 34:31). He provided the leadership but the people did not follow. They pledged to act in accordance with the Law, but because of a lack of belief, it was without wholeheartedness, enthusiasm, or even repentant remorse. They were “caused ... to stand to it” (2 Chronicles 34:32) and returned to their old ways as soon as Josiah’s leadership was removed (2 Kings 23:30-32). After all, of what use was a religion that could not save its chief sponsor from disaster?

Though Jeremiah spoke favorably of the king and his reform (Jeremiah 22:15,16), he saw the true character of the people. He knew they mistook the outward ritual for a true worship of God.

Rejecting the foreboding of the prophet, the beguiled people pointed to the order and beauty of the restored temple: “Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these. For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor; if ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt: then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever” (Jeremiah 7:3-7).

Alongside the decorum and elevated ritual the grossest of conduct was carried on with unblushing shamelessness: “Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the LORD” (Jeremiah 8:12).

The will of God for his creation is not just the hearing of his word, but the believing and doing of it. In spite of the great leadership and work of Josiah, the people did not heed. As the prophet cited: “From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, even unto this day, that is the three and twentieth year [of Jeremiah’s admonishing the people], the word of the LORD hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye have not hearkened. And the LORD hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending them; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear” (Jeremiah 25:3,4).

Though there had never been a “Passover like to” the Passover of Josiah, its grandeur did not accomplish God’s purpose. As Jeremiah reminded Judah, obedience was the divine desire, not pomp and circumstance: “Obey my voice, and do them, according to all which I [God] command you: so shall ye be my people, and I will be your God” (Jeremiah 11:4).

It is a Fearful Thing. God’s earthly chosen people failed to appreciate the awesome privilege extended to them by the creator of the physical cosmos. The consequence of their unbelief was terrible to behold. Those who are God’s heavenly chosen people (Hebrews 3:1) must learn from their example: “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God” (Hebrews 3:12).

All who are of God’s heavenly people must be bold and not waver (Hebrews 10:19,23). In faith they must “crucify the old man” (Romans 6:6; Ephesians 4:22; Colossians 3:9), burning the bones. They must purge the “old leaven” so they may be “worthy” to partake of their Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7). “But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh ~~damnation~~ [judgment, *krima*, #2917] to himself” (1 Corinthians 11:28,29).

Though the phrasing is different, this challenge to the Corinthians is similar to the admonition Paul set forth in his epistle to the Hebrews: “Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he [a partaker of the “heavenly calling,” Hebrews 3:1] be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God [the Bread], and hath counted the blood of the covenant [the Cup, Hebrews 2:14; 9:20; 12:24], wherewith he [Jesus¹] was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:29-31).

Upon hearing the word of the Torah, Josiah understood the will of his God and did all he could to convey that understanding to God’s earthly people. His faith as an individual and the people’s lack of faith as a nation provide important lessons for God’s heavenly people. The life of all who are to serve God must be a life of faith, a life lived in complete confidence in God and his Word. “Now the just [righteous] shall live ~~by~~ [out of, *ek*, #1537] faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him” (Hebrews 10:38).

Josiah’s lament demonstrated he well understood the consequence of God’s displeasure. “The Lord shall judge his people” (Hebrews 10:30). It is indeed “a fearful thing to fall in the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:31).

The Passing Over of Elijah

Crossing the Jordan

And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground.

2 Kings 2:8

Verse-by-verse study of 2 Kings 2 by Carl Hagensick

There are four occasions in the Old Testament when waters were dried up to permit people to pass on dry ground: 1) The nation of Israel going from west to east across the Red Sea; 2) The nation of Israel going from east to west across the Jordan River; 3) Elijah going from west to east across the Jordan River; 4) Elisha going from east to west across the Jordan River. Two of these are described in 2 Kings 2, a chapter we will look at in detail.

An Eventful Day 2 Kings 2, verse 1

And it came to pass, when the LORD would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.

Though this chapter is not referenced in the New Testament, on several occasions Jesus did apply the prophecy of Elijah in Malachi 4:5,6 to a spokesman of the Lord announcing the approach of “the great and dreadful day of the LORD”—an apt reference to the true Christian Church.

Elijah was apparently aware of the Lord’s intentions to take his life that day, for his visit to Bethel and Jericho was to inform the school of the prophets of his imminent demise and the appointment of Elisha to take his place. Too frequently Christian leaders are not so aware of their mortality and fail to arrange for successors to the roles they play in the church.

The aging prophet was also probably informed of the method of his death: a great storm would carry him up into the heavens. We infer from this that the career of the church on earth ends in a storm cloud of trouble completing the heavenly salvation.

The narrative begins with Elijah at Gilgal. The name Gilgal, meaning “circle,” imply a setting in a box canyon in the Judean hills just west of the Jordan valley. Gilgal was the first location of the Tabernacle when Israel passed over the Jordan under Joshua. That crossing followed the occupation of the East Bank of the Jordan by the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh.

These two-and-a-half tribes claimed the east bank of the Jordan and could have this inheritance only if they helped their brother tribes conquer the rest of the land. This

suggests they represent the heavenly salvation who help their brothers of the human race achieve the earthly salvation, represented on the western side. (See further comments on this picture in *The Passover Renewed*, p. 21.)

Thus the incidents of Joshua with the Israelites and also Elijah are connected: 1) by a crossing of Jordan dry shod; 2) both represent the time when the full number of the heavenly salvation is complete and the work of the earthly kingdom is about to begin; 3) both narratives are associated with Gilgal. It was also at Gilgal that the people assembled to welcome back David as king after his exile during the rebellion of Absalom (2 Samuel 19:15).

Bethel and Jericho—verses 2 to 7

And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Bethel. And Elisha said unto him, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Bethel. And the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace. And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Jericho. And he said will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho. And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master? a, I know it; hold ye your peace. And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the LORD hath sent me to Jordan. And he said will not leave thee. And they two went on. And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off: and they two stood by Jordan.

The term “sons of the prophets” probably refers to a training school in the office of prophecy. After being originally organized in Naioth of Ramah by Samuel (1 Samuel 19:19,20), it likely fell into disuse until it was reorganized by Elijah and expanded to groups in Gilgal, Bethel, and Jericho. The journey to these cities to inform them of Elijah’s replacement by Elisha was met similarly. Upon hearing the news, the sons of the prophets inquired as to Elisha’s response. In all cases Elijah invited him to stay behind, but the younger prophet declined, choosing to accompany his mentor until his departure.

Let us consider the pictorial implications of this story and begin by identifying modern counterparts for the various characters involved.

ELIJAH: As God’s prophetic spokesman for his time, he finds a counterpart in the church, the followers of Jesus. (See Malachi 4:5,6; Matthew 17:1-13; Mark 6:15; Luke 9:8; Luke 4:26.)

ELISHA: As the anointed prophetic spokesman to succeed Elijah, he symbolizes, at the beginning, the Great Company, and then/after the Ancient Worthies.

SONS OF THE PROPHETS: “Elijah represented the Little Flock and Elisha the Great Company who are also the Lord’s people, and to some extent associated with them but

are not so zealous for the Truth as the Little Flock, and these sons of the prophets have more or less interest in both the others. This picture seems to indicate that, after the separation has taken place between the Little Flock and Great Company, there will be still another class of righteous people more or less connected with the Lord's people who are included neither in the one class or the other—neither the Elijah nor the Elisha class—but who are posted somewhat, and who will be saying thus and so.”—*What Pastor Russell Said*, p. 666.

Although some have historically interpreted the three cities visited as representing dates, there appears to be no precedent for applying cities to dates; rather cities frequently picture governments or organizations. The progression of Elijah and Elisha through these towns, where schools of prophets were located, represents the passage of the church and Great Company through a series of organizations before the final exaltation of the church to her heavenly home. It is interesting that the first organization through which the harvest church has passed used the name “Bethel designate its headquarters. It may also be significant that though fifty of the sons of the prophets in Jericho followed to view the crossing of the river at a respectful distance, those in Bethel remained where they were. If Gilgal represents Christendom (compare Hosea 9:15), and Bethel the truth movement in the day of Pastor Russell, perhaps the ones remaining in Bethel show that many of the Lord's unconsecrated but sincere people remained in the Society.

Smiting the Jordan—verse 8

And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground.

Since there was no town at the Jordan, it would seem that this does not represent an organization, but an event. On the two prior crossings of bodies of water by Israel—at the Red Sea and Jordan entering the promised land—the waters represented the death sentence and the successful entrance into a new life. There seems no reason to depart from this concept in this incident.

On the other hand both Elijah and Elisha passed together and walked for some distance conversing with one another after going across the river. If the church class is limited to precisely 144,000 as suggested in Revelation 7:4 and 14:3, and if each of these must be tested before being found worthy, then there must come a time when the last member who will be accounted faithful begins his consecrated course. At that time no further members of the Great Company will begin their Christian walk either. At that point in time both the church and the Great Company will have, for all practical purposes, passed over the sentence of Adamic death. Yet their lives will be prolonged long enough for a final testing and approval or disapproval and their conversation together will continue.

This verse not only describes the river crossing, but also the means. The waters divided when struck by Elijah's mantle. The mantle of Elijah indicated his prophetic function and authorization to speak in God's name. When Elijah anointed Elisha to be his successor, he demonstrated that fact by putting his mantle on Elisha's shoulders (1 Kings 19:19).

This suggests that the passing over of this death sentence would be by the exercise of his prophetic function—the giving of a final message. The coincidence of this with the dividing of the waters “hither and thither”—not cleanly separated—further implies that the timing of the mantle’s strike was simultaneous with the onset of the storm that eventuated in the whirlwind in which Elijah ascended. Perhaps this indicates that the real cause of dividing the waters was the storm, the smiting by the mantle, being simultaneous, only an apparent cause.

Consider the instrument the Lord used in drying up the waters in the various crossings of Israel and these two prophets: 1) At the Red Sea it was Moses stretching out his hand [presumably with the rod of command] (Exodus 14:21,27) and speaking to the children of Israel that they “go forward (Exodus 14:15). 2) In Israel’s crossing into the promised land, it was the moving of the ark of the covenant into the overflowing stream (Joshua 3:3,11). 3) In the two 2 Kings 2 crossings it was through the use of a prophet’s mantle, first by Elijah and later by Elisha.

Why did Elijah smite the Jordan? Answer: to reach the other side. So the desire of the church, and for that matter the Great Company as well, is to reach the other side—the heavenly salvation.

Elisha’s Question—verses 9, 10

And Elijah said, What shall I do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.

The recorded conversation between the two prophets on the eastern shore is brief, one question and its answer. Elisha requested a double portion of the spirit. Though some scholars note sixteen recorded miracles by Elisha as compared with eight by Elijah, this is probably not the real import of the double portion.

A “double portion is the firstborn’s inheritance (Deuteronomy 21:17). Adam Clarke notes that “the original words, *pi shenayim*, mean rather two parts, than double the quantity. The Great Company will share with the closest followers of Christ, “the church of the firstborn (Revelation 12:23).

Elijah’s response is that though the request is a difficult one, Elisha can secure his request by remaining with Elijah until he is caught up. This indicates that members of the Great Company, though desiring to be part of the firstborn class, can only feel assured of this reward if they loyally stand by the true church until it departs from the earthly scene.

Elijah's Exaltation—verses 11, 12

they still went on ere appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them.

Two elements come into play as the drama unfolds: a chariot of fire and a whirlwind. The stated function of the chariot is to part Elijah and Elisha asunder, and the whirlwind is the means of Elijah's exaltation. For this reason many feel Elijah was not transported in the chariot, but only by the whirlwind. However, since a chariot is a means of conveyance, the separation probably occurred by Elijah getting into the chariot while Elisha remained behind. Pastor Russell makes an interesting comment about this: "Elijah was separated from earthly scenes by a chariot of fire, representative of the spiritual glory and exaltation awaiting use of the Church alive and remaining to the last days."—*The Time Is At Hand*, p. 260.

Later in the same paragraph he identifies it further by saying "a storm is a symbol of trouble, as much as the fiery chariot is a figure of victory and glorious escape from the trouble. a similar usage we meet chariots of fire in 2 Kings 6:17 where, when the city of Dothan was surrounded by Syrian enemies, "Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. d he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. ee also 2 Kings 13:14.)

The implication is that this protection is through the ministry of angels. This is more clearly stated in Psalm 68:17, "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the LORD is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place. is is the fulfillment of the promise in Psalm 34:7, "The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.

Elisha Smites the Jordan—verses 13, 14

He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan; And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.

As Elijah was taken heavenward, his mantle fell at Elijah's feet. Now was the time for Elisha to use his prophetic office. His leaving from the eastern bank of Jordan represents the Great Company entering into death, probably preceded by giving a message of truth with the church represented by Elijah. As Elisha emerged on the western bank he continued to represent the office of the Lord's spokesman on earth, an office fulfilled when the Ancient Worthies emerge from death.

Though we are not given details of this message, there is an intimation of it in Canticles. A woman possessing the same lack of conviction and courage as the Great Company

finally awakens to search for her Lord. In her search she meets the “daughters of Jerusalem,” title suggesting the descendants of natural Israel. To these she utters the beautiful description of her Lord found in Canticles 5:10-16. This causes these daughters of Jerusalem to join the search for this Messianic lover (Canticles 6:1). Pastor Russell comments on this: “It is not our expectation that the Jews will become Christians now. It will be after they shall have returned to Palestine and the spirit of prayer and supplication shall have been poured on them, that they will ‘look upon him whom they pierced.’ The message is to comfort them and to turn their eyes toward Palestine and to their glorious promises centering there. The Scriptures seem to imply that the Great Company will have the honor and privilege of leading them to recognize Jesus as Messiah, during the time of trouble.”—*Reprints*, p. 4728.

The Search for Elijah—verses 15-18

The sons of the prophets id, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha, d bowed themselves to the ground before him. And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest peradventure the Spirit of the LORD hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send. And when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, Send. d they sought three days, but found him not.

Elisha’s smiting the Jordan not only permitted his safe passage, but was a sign to the observant sons of the prophets that he had the same authority Elijah had possessed. Undoubtedly they reached this conclusion by seeing his mentor’s mantle on Elisha’s shoulders, and even more so by his duplicating Elijah’s feat of dividing the waters of the river.

The desire of the sons of the prophets to send a search party to find Elijah’s body shows they did not believe he actually went to heaven, but that he had been lifted by the tempestuous winds and dropped near by. Over the protests of Elisha they conducted their search, but it was unsuccessful.

Verses 19-24 speak of two episodes: healing the brackish water with a new cruse of salt (the application of truths from those who have been “the salt of the earthll cleanse the - waters for the world), and rebuking forty-two youths for mocking Elisha (the spiritually immature of Christendom which formerly ruled for forty-two months, disposed to mock the authority of the Ancient Worthies).

Elisha Moves Onward—verse 25

And he went from thence to mount Carmel, and from thence he returned to Samaria.

After revisiting the two schools of the prophets, Elisha’s onward journey carried him to Mount Carmel, then back northwest to Samaria, the capital of Israel. Mount Carmel was the location of Elijah’s earlier contest with the priests of Baal where he dramatically demonstrated the power of Jehovah and the impotence of foreign gods. The journey of

the newly-anointed prophet thus endorsed by this historic visit, he wentspan>to the capital city where his career is set in marked contrast to that of Elijah. Whereas Elijah was sharply critical of the corrupt and godless regime of Ahab and the house of Omri, Elisha became a trusted advisor to the next three kings of Israel.

The taking up of Elijah and the installation of Elisha in his stead furnishes many details of the transition of the kingdoms of this world into the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

News and Views

Pastoral Bible Institute News

Date of Annual PBI Meeting

The annual meeting of PBI Members and Directors will be held on Friday, July 16, at Chapman University, Orange, California. The General Convention of Bible Students will begin on Saturday, July 17, at the same location and end the evening of July 22. Those who are interested in the Pastoral Bible Institute, whether members or not, are encouraged to attend this meeting. Contact the Institute's secretary for details concerning accommodations.

Letter

It was a pleasure to read the fine articles about the Great Pyramid in the January/February Herald. [The] comments about the concealed air passageways in the Queen's Chamber are very current. It could be of interest to others to learn that Rudolf Gantenbrink's work exploring one of the passageways is available [at www.cheops.org. It is] entitled The Upuat Project. It is lengthy but well illustrated and detailed.

Bill Siekman, Jr., Wisconsin

World News

Religious

In a Harris poll taken in 2003, 82 percent of Americans said they believed in heaven, and of these, 63 percent said they were likely to go there. Only one percent said they were going to hell. Since the mid-1970s, the percentage of Americans who believe in the afterlife has increased slightly, even though other measures of religious belief have declined according to surveys by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago. Ann Graham Lotz, a daughter of the evangelist Billy Graham and president of the Angel Ministries, rued the lack of hellfire in sermons today. She said that clergy members are not laying out the whole story. "I don't know when was the last time I heard a mention of hell in a sermon, yet Jesus mentioned hell more than he did heaven. We need to be reminded because a lot of people are going there."

—New York Times, 12/21/2003

The European Union prepared a report on anti-Semitism but buried it because it showed that Muslim and pro-Palestinian elements are involved in most of the incidents. The European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), which serves as the EU's racism watchdog organization, commissioned a report on anti-Semitism in early

2002, following a sharp increase in anti-Jewish violence. However, when it received the report towards the end of the year, the EUMC objected to the focus on Muslim and pro-Palestinian perpetrators, judging this inflammatory. The EUMC decided to shelve the 112-page study.

—Arutz 7, 11/23/2003

European countries plan to expel thousands of Muslim refugees beginning in February 2004. The Kuwaiti newspaper Al-Siyasah quotes a British diplomat to the effect that rising terrorism has led the EU to decide to formulate a joint counter-terrorism plan including the expulsion of Middle Eastern, Asian and African Muslims. “This will be a quick and immediate procedure to prevent the terrorism war from arriving in other European capitals,” the British diplomat said. In addition to Great Britain, other countries that have agreed to this step are France, Spain and Italy. Some 28 million Muslims currently live in the European Union, of whom 25% are citizens and another 40% are illegal aliens.

—Arutz 7, 11/27/2003

Islamic militants burned down thirteen churches and several houses and shops in the remote northern Nigerian town of Kazaure after a Christian student was accused of insulting the prophet Muhammad, police said. Hundreds have died in religious clashes in Kano, capital of the neighboring Jigawa province, in the last three years.

—Los Angeles Times, 11/21/2003

Turkey became the latest flashpoint in a widening campaign of apparent Islamist terror. The blasts killed at least 23 people and wounded more than 300. The incident marks the latest in a string of attacks on Jewish targets across the Muslim world. It is Turkey’s bond with Israel, cemented in 1996 with a far-reaching military pact, that has been particularly galling to Arab hard-liners. Turkey was the first Muslim country to recognize Israel after the latter’s creation in 1948.

—Wall Street Journal, 11/17/2003

Social

After declining for years, the number of people in the world who are going hungry is on the rise, the United Nations’ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) stated in its annual hunger report. The number of hungry people in developing countries declined by 37 million during the first half of the 1990s but increased by 18 million in the second half. The FAO estimates in its fifth annual report on “The State of Food Insecurity in the World” that 842 million people were undernourished in 1999-2001. This is not the famine-type hunger associated with drought. It’s a diet that routinely supplies 1,400 to 1,700 calories a day. Several U.N. agencies say 2,300 calories is the minimum needed for a healthy life. In 26 countries, the number of undernourished people went up. Hunger

very seldom happens because of lack of food, according to the report. “There is enough food available in world markets and even often in countries, but people who are affected by hunger don’t have access to it,” said Hartwig de Haen, FAO assistant director.

—USA Today, 11/25/2003

Deaths and new cases of HIV/AIDS reached unprecedented highs in 2003 and are set to rise still further as the epidemic keeps a stranglehold on sub-Saharan Africa and advances across Eastern Europe and Central Asia. New global estimates based on improved data released in November show about 40 million people worldwide are living with HIV/AIDS, including an estimated 2.5 million children under 15 years old. “In two short decades HIV/AIDS has tragically become the premier disease of mass destruction,” Dr. Jack Chow, of the World Health Organization told a news conference. “The death odometer from HIV/AIDS is now at 8,000 a day and accelerating.”

—Reuters, 11/25/2003

Rescue workers Saturday pulled a barely injured 97-year-old woman from under a collapsed building where she had been trapped nine days after a powerful earthquake razed this city [Bam, Iran]. Despite the good news, the official death toll rose to about 35,000. The death toll has varied according to differing estimates of how many bodies are still under the rubble and of thousands of unregistered burials. Bill Garvelink, head of the U.S. relief team in the southern Iranian city, has said the destruction was worse than in any quake zone he had ever seen. “It’s incredible,” he said. “Bam is literally a rubble pile.”

—Los Angeles Times, 1/4/2004

2003 was the world’s third warmest on record. Canada, the US, China and parts of Russia experienced near-record temperatures in the northern summer, although northern China and Japan were abnormally cold. Meanwhile, some parts of Africa experienced the wettest conditions in 70 years. Many diplomats and scientists have expressed their conviction that we are seeing a significant warming trend and a greater frequency of weather-related natural disasters. But skeptics say that climate alarmists are ignoring the natural variability of the climate, quoting scientific warnings from the 1970s on the risk of global cooling after decades of falling temperatures. The 20th century was neither the warmest nor the most extreme century for weather in recent history, according to researchers at the Center for Astrophysics.

—Financial Times, 12/31/2003

Only 25 commercial airliners crashed in fatal accidents in 2003, by far the lowest number in modern aviation history. The United States had two: an Air Midwest flight that crashed on Jan. 8 in Charlotte, N.C., killing 21 people, and an Aug., 26 crash on Cape Cod, Mass., that killed two crew members. Overall, the world's fatal airliner accidents last year killed 677 people, the third fewest since World War II. Because far more people are

flying far more miles, however, fatalities per mile are the lowest in history. Until a Christmas Day crash killed 138 in the West African country of Benin, the world was on track for the fewest deaths.

—Seattle Times, 1/3/2004

The incidence of diabetes has been rising in recent years, in children as well as in adults, primarily due to the increase in obesity among Americans. The prevalence rose 40 percent in the 1990s. By 2050, unless current trends are reversed, experts predict a further increase of 165 percent. An analysis published in October in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* by scientists at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention predicts [that] for those born in 2000, 32.8 percent of boys and 36.5 percent of girls will develop diabetes in their lifetime.

—New York Times, 12/23/2003

Civil

[A military campaign in Iraq's north] that echoes the Nazi killing machine in its efficiency and brutality left at least 100,000 [Kurdish] people dead. ... For six months in 1988 Iraqi troops and Kurdish militias arrested the inhabitants of suspected rebel strongholds and destroyed thousands of villages. Males of fighting age were the main target, but many of the victims were also women and children. In some villages entire populations were slaughtered. The extermination received relatively little attention abroad during Hussein's dictatorship. With Hussein gone from power, 263 suspected mass graves have been discovered, stretching from Mosul in the north to the remote deserts of the south.

—Los Angeles Times, 12/5/2003

The failure of the European Union constitution talks has created serious doubts about the future of Union itself. One possible result may be that the French are increasingly disillusioned by the soon-to-be enlarged EU of 25 countries and are drawn instead to the idea of a "core Europe," in which a small group of countries, led naturally by France and Germany, press ahead with deeper integration. The French were particularly shocked by the temerity of new members such as Poland lining up with America in the run-up to the Iraq war. The collapse of the constitutional talks may allow the French to insist that an enlarged EU will be unworkable so that a core Europe is needed. A prolonged period of political wrangling now seems inevitable. And that might worsen the EU's most worrisome problem: its increasing unpopularity. This month the European Commission's own opinion polls showed that less than half of EU citizens (48%) agreed that their country's membership was a good thing, the lowest level ever recorded.

—Economist, 12/18/2003

Financial

Italian police arrested seven suspects including two former Parmalat finance directors, and two executives from auditor Grant Thornton in what is emerging as one of Europe's largest financial frauds. Chairman Calisto Tanzi Sr. admitted that he had appropriated about €500m of company funds during the past eight years, largely to finance Parmatour, a family-controlled leisure and travel business. People close to the company said that Mr. Bondi and his assistants were still quantifying the amount of missing funds—conservatively put at €7bn–€10bn—and assessing whether they would be able to retrieve any of the money.
—Financial Times, 12/30/2003

870 billion Total number of frequent-flyer miles U.S. airlines owe their passengers.

7 billion Total miles to Pluto and back.

50,000 Number of people in the air in the United States at any given moment.

—LAX Airport Poster, 12/31/2003

Europe will bridge its final post-World War II divisions when ten mostly Eastern European countries join the European Union on May 1. That doesn't mean the battles are over. The entry of Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Cyprus (the Greek half), Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Malta, which will swell the EU to 25 countries with 450 million people, will worsen disputes over subsidies, the euro currency and the EU's military ambitions, according to Philippe de Buck, secretary general of the European employers federation.

—Bloomberg News, 12/30/2003

One of the promises of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was that it would close the great gaps in wages and living standards between the United States and Mexico and keep Mexicans working on their side of the border. But by every measurable standard, the gap between rich and poor in Mexico widened. Unemployment went up and real wages, eroded by a collapse of the peso in 1995, are flat or down for many millions of workers.

—New York Times, 12/27/2003

Philipp Missfelder, a German college student who runs the youth organization of Germany's largest conservative party, the Christian Democrats, set off the waves that continue to ripple through one of his country's most freighted debates. In an interview with a Berlin newspaper, Mr. Missfelder said that elderly people are soaking up Germany's financial resources, with lavish pensions and gold-plated health care plans. Such largess, he said, comes at the expense of young Germans who will be strangled by the burden of supporting an ever larger population of retirees. In the German paper *Der*

Tagesspiegel, he complained about 85-year-olds getting costly hip replacements rather than just making do with crutches as in old times.

—New York Times, 12/27/2003

The government of oil-rich Terengganu state in Malaysia enacted Islamic laws, complete with Quran-decreed punishments including amputation, stoning and flogging for convicted Muslim offenders in the state. The growing appeal of fundamentalist Islam in Malaysia raises the question: Can economic development alone satisfy a Muslim society? If Malaysia is any guide, the answer appears to be “not necessarily.” New Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi is pinning hopes on economic progress as an antidote to Islamic extremism everywhere from Iraq and Afghanistan to Indonesia. Dozens of - Malaysian militants have been linked to Southeast Asian terrorist groups with ties to al Qaeda.

—Wall Street Journal, 11/7/2003

Israel

Unemployment in Israel is getting worse. The number of jobless who have not worked in the past 12 months surged to a new record of 154,400, according to a report by the Bank of Israel research division, based on Central Bureau of Statistics figures. The Bank of Israel report stated that the unemployment rate was 10.7% in the third quarter, amounting to 278,700 persons and equivalent to a seasonally adjusted 11.6%.

—Globes, 11/27/2003

By next year, a 24-foot-high concrete wall running down the middle of Ram, a busy northern suburb of Jerusalem, will divide Palestinian-administered Ram from Israeli-governed Jerusalem. Designed to stop Palestinian suicide bombers from entering Israel, the separation barrier is backed by the majority of Israelis. But the barrier, which cuts into the West Bank to take in Jewish settlements, has angered Palestinians, been criticized by the United Nations and even called a problem by President Bush, normally a staunch defender of Israeli policies. With Israel now weighing unilateral steps toward separating the two peoples, the barrier would draw a tangible line through a city. This remains one of the most heated issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. “We built the fence because we don’t have any other means of protecting the lives of Israelis,” says Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom. “We have had 19,000 terrorist attacks over the last three years. I don’t think any other country would have acted differently.”

—Wall Street Journal, 12/19/2003

For a Palestinian accused of cooperating with Israel’s security forces, confession can amount to a death sentence. For Israel, the business of recruiting informers is a vital phase of the fight against terrorism. Israel’s security forces rely heavily on informers to stop suicide bombers and arrest and kill militants. The army carries out raids almost

nightly in densely packed neighborhoods, which are poorly lighted and unmarked. Palestinians say Israel looks for those in vulnerable positions, then exerts great pressure on them, using blackmail and other threats to keep them cooperative. Most often, Israel simply pays a small sum, perhaps \$100 a month, for a typical collaborator, said Palestinian security officials who have investigated such cases. With the Palestinian economy in ruins, money is a powerful lure, the officials said. The Palestinian Authority, established in 1994, now puts suspected collaborators on trial. But vigilante killings are also still common, and Palestinians have slain more than 70 in the past three years. Suspects are often convicted in trials lasting only a few hours. In January 2001, two convicted collaborators were executed by a firing squad in Gaza. The European Union protested, and in response the Palestinian leader, Yasir Arafat, said he would halt all executions.

—New York Times, 11/29/2003

The American National Intelligence Council (NIC) has reached the conclusion that no peace between Israel and the Palestinians is possible before the year 2020. The NIC, which is headed by CIA Director George Tenet, believes that the death of Yassir Arafat would be a positive catalyst toward peace. The group cautions, however, that war between Israel and Syria remains possible, and if it happens, all positive projections would be nullified. It warns that biological or even nuclear weapons might be used if such a conflict arises. Also on the list of concerns is instability in Saudi Arabia and Egypt, with emphasis on the negative effect an ensuing radical Islamic regime would have on peace with Israel.

—The Media Line, 12/17/2003

The Bush administration, in a rare rebuke to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, has decided to rescind \$289.5 million in American-backed loan guarantees for Israel as a punishment for illegal construction activities in the West Bank. Although it was the United States that took the action on the loan guarantees, the announcement was pointedly made by Israel. After the Israeli statement, a White House spokesman said the Bush administration welcomed what Israel had done and expressed gratitude for its acknowledgment that its activities in the West Bank were inconsistent with American policy.

—New York Times, 11/26/2003

Tourism to Israel continues to show a steady increase with as many tourists coming to Israel in the first ten months of 2003 as came in all of 2002. Figures released by the Central Bureau of Statistics and the Tourism Ministry show that a total of 852,400 tourists visited Israel from January to October this year, up 20% from 707,500 during the same months in 2002. In October alone 112,600 tourists entered Israel, 46% more than the number of tourist entries in October 2002, and 60% more than the number for October 2001.

—Forward (a Jewish weekly magazine), 12/5/2003

