

THE SEVEN JEWISH FESTIVALS

THE PROPHETIC CALENDAR OF ISRAEL

By Arlen L. Chirwood

The seven festivals in Leviticus chapter twenty-three constitute what could be called, “The Prophetic Calendar of Israel.”

These seven festivals are *Jewish*, not Christian. They were given to *Israel*, through Moses, and have to do with *the Jewish people alone*. And they foreshadow that which will occur in the camp of Israel at the time of Christ’s return.

A secondary application of that seen in these festivals — that foreshadowed by the events, along with the sequence in which these events occurred — can be seen in the history of the Church, but that is neither here nor there. *These festivals are Jewish, they have to do first and foremost with the Jewish people, and this must be recognized.*

These seven festivals outline in chronological order a sequence of events about to transpire in the camp of Israel, and are all unfulfilled insofar as Israel is concerned. The fulfillment of Israel’s national Passover (the first of the seven

festivals) in the antitype of Exodus chapter twelve is yet future, as are events in the other six festivals. Events surrounding the Passover must occur first, and this feast of the Lord will not be fulfilled until the end of the Tribulation.

The progression of events in these seven festivals reveal a progression of events which will occur in the camp of Israel when Christ returns as the great King-Priest after the order of Melchizedek to deliver His covenant people.

Following the return of Christ at the end of the Tribulation there will be a seventy-five-day period between the end of the last seven years of Daniel’s prophecy and the beginning of the Millennium (Dan. 12:11-13). And Scripture clearly reveals that the events set forth in the first six feasts of the Lord, leading up to events in the terminal festival, the feast of Tabernacles, will transpire during this time.

Then the feast of Tabernacles itself will be fulfilled during the ensuing millennial reign.

a) *Passover*: This festival has to do with *the national conversion of Israel*, when the nation looks upon the Pierced One. The Lamb has already died, the blood has been shed (Ex. 12:6), but Israel has yet to apply the blood (Ex. 12:7).

In this respect, the festival was partially fulfilled almost 2,000 years ago, but the complete fulfillment awaits a future date. Israel today dwells between the statement ending Ex. 12:6 and the statement beginning Ex. 12:7, and this festival can be fulfilled only when the nation acts in accordance with that stated in verse seven:

“...the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it [the paschal lamb, foreshadowing the Paschal Lamb which Israel slew 1,500 years later] in the evening [*lit.*, ‘between the evenings,’ which is part way between noon and 6 PM].

And they shall take of the blood [that which Israel has yet to do]...” (Ex. 12:6b, 7a).

Note in the type that the Passover occurred while Israel was still in Egypt. In the antitype Israel will have her national Passover while the nation is still scattered throughout the Gentile world (“Egypt” is always a type of *the world* in Scripture). This is the time when “they [the Jewish people] will look upon” their Messiah, and a nation will be “born at once” (Zech. 12:10; Isa. 66:8).

As well, bear something in mind about Israel in relation to the Passover. When time again begins in Daniel’s 70-Week prophecy, Israel will find herself, time-wise, in the position of having just crucified the nation’s Messiah.

Actually though, the passage of generations in this respect is *meaningless*. Every generation of Jews both before and since that time has shared *exactly the same guilt* in which the generation committing the act found itself in 33 A.D. (*cf.* Matt. 23:35-39; 27:25; Luke 13:33-35).

If this were not true, the nation would have to be divided in this respect, with part of the nation *unclean* through contact with the dead body of their Messiah and part not unclean.

Scripture though presents *the entire nation as unclean in this respect* (Num. 19). It is the entire nation one day seen availing herself of *the ransom*

(translated “satisfaction” KJV) in Num. 35:31, 32.

In short, *every Jew alive today is just as guilty, in God’s eyes, as the generation committing this act in 33 A.D.* (note that those slaying Christ were also guilty of slaying *the Prophets, among others, hundreds and thousands of years earlier* [Matt. 23:35-37]).

Israel has slain the Lamb (for the pascal lamb was given to Israel, and they are the only nation which could slay this lamb [Acts 2:23, 36; 7:52]). But, the Jewish people have yet to apply the blood of the Paschal Lamb which they slew in 33 A.D.

And the festivals in Lev. 23 *MUST be fulfilled, relative to Israel, in chronological order.* Before any of the other six festivals can be fulfilled, *the blood of the Paschal Lamb MUST be applied (through belief, when they look upon the One Whom they pierced* [Zech. 12:10 — not the generation in 33 A.D. but the generation alive in that coming day]).

b) *Unleavened Bread:* This festival has to do with *the removal of sin from the house (house of Israel) after the Passover.* Of what sin (or sins) is Israel guilty? Israel is guilty of unbelief, resulting in disobedience over centuries of time, with an apex of this disobedience seen in Israel’s harlotry out among the nations. Then the Jewish people climaxed their unbelief, disobedience, by crucifying their Messiah when He appeared to the nation.

And, because of this climactic act, as previously seen, Israel is presently unclean through contact with the dead body of the nation’s Messiah, and will remain unclean for two days (2,000 years [Num. 19:11, 12]).

After two days, on the third day (on the third 1,000-year period [after the Tribulation, which will end the two days]), Israel is going to acknowledge her sin in the presence of the very One Whom she crucified (*cf.* Gen. 44:16). Israel will then put sin out of the house (out of the house of Israel).

c) *First Fruits:* This festival has to do with *resurrection.* Christ was raised from the dead on this day, and Old Testament saints will be raised from the dead at this time, fulfilling this festival. The first fruits of the resurrection of Old Testament saints occurred after Christ was raised (Matt. 27:52, 53). The main harvest will follow.

d) *Pentecost:* Note what began to occur on the day of Pentecost, 33 A.D. (Acts 2:1ff). Joel’s prophecy began to be fulfilled, and this prophecy would have been completely fulfilled had Israel done what Peter told the Jews to do in Acts 2:38 — national repentance, followed by national baptism.

However, Israel did not repent, the nation was subsequently set aside for a dispensation, and any fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy has also been set aside with Israel for a dispensation. *Joel’s prophecy cannot be fulfilled today, even in part. But it will be fulfilled immediately after the resurrection of Old Testament saints* (Joel 2:27-32).

e) *Trumpets:* This festival has to do with *the regathering of Israel.* Christians await a trumpet calling them into the heavens before the Tribulation; Israel awaits a trumpet calling the nation back into the land after the Tribula-

tion, following Christ’s return (Matt. 24:29-31; I Thess. 4:16-18).

f) *Atonement:* This festival has to do with *a cleansing from sin for a people who will have already availed themselves of the blood of the Passover Lamb.* Activities on this day have to do with blood on the mercy seat and cleansing from sin (sins previously acknowledged and put out of the house [the house of Israel], fulfilling the festival of unleavened bread.

Atonement (the *ransom* [Num. 35:31, 32] is from a cognate form of the word for “atonement” in the Hebrew text) is to be provided for Israel’s sin of crucifying her Messiah (the same blood shed at Calvary, now on the mercy seat). Note the order in Ezek. 36:24, 25 — a regathering before cleansing from sin.

g) *Tabernacles:* This is the last of the festivals and has to do with *offerings made unto the Lord and a time of rest at the conclusion of the preceding feasts of the Lord.* This festival points forward to the millennial offerings (Ezek. 45:15ff; 46:2ff) and a time of rest in the coming age after the conclusion of events surrounding the first six feasts of the Lord.

This festival lasted for seven days — a complete period of time — pointing forward to the complete duration of the Millennium.

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