

From the Inkhorn

This is the third Latter Rain on the topic of Israel. The first (LR 43) showed that "Israel's Time Draws Near", and that we believe there are many promises in the Bible yet to be fulfilled which relate to Israel in the latter days – or the period of time just prior to Jesus' return to the Earth. The second, "Who Are Israelites?", added the perspective that true Israelites are those who have the message of God for Israel in their hearts, and are not necessarily concerned about the land of Israel so much as about being obedient to God's laws, and looking for the redemption of their bodies – of which the land is a figure. This issue looks further at some of the fundamentals of God's relationship with Israel. The article on "The Law" shows that whilst Jesus fulfilled the sacrificial laws there is no reason to assume that the rest of the Law is not still applicable for us today, and sets out a lifestyle that is beneficial for us to follow. Other articles look at the forms of the sacrifices required by God showing how these all pointed to Jesus - and how He fulfilled them. "Feasts and Festivals" details the times when God commanded the Israelites to come together to worship Him, and to join in fellowship. Expand Your Bible considers "Worship" and its importance as manifested in such activities as the coming together of Israel for the Feasts.

The more we see the way God structured the Feasts and Festivals the more we see His wisdom in mandating that people come together

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at least three times in a year to enjoy fellowship and to set their hearts aright before Him.

Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments," John 14:15. His commandments are those of the Father and are set out for us to follow in the whole of the Scriptures.

With this issue we also wish to send season's greeting to all our readers. May God bless you richly as you seek to worship Him and recognise the depth of love manifest in the gift of Jesus Christ to all mankind. 📖

The Laws

by Rodney GRAY

The laws as given to Israel can be broken down into a number of categories – ceremonial (or sacrificial) laws, the moral laws that govern co-existence with each other, and civil laws that establish social equity and judgement. People categorise these differently – is there a right solution and do they still apply today?

Today, the government in most Western countries has a level of central or national government, a state Parliament and local government. The church generally is independent of any level of government. The government, in different combinations of federal, state, and local, pays for education and health care, and provides public services. When Israel came out of Egypt under the leadership of Moses the nation was a theocracy. God was directly 'the King' and Moses somewhat equivalent to a Prime Minister who received instructions directly from God.

The Laws which God gave to Moses in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, and reiterated in Deuteronomy, covered all aspects of government. They included moral Laws – that which was required of individuals in relationship with each other and towards the community; civil Laws – about how the country was to be run including economic and financial responsibilities; and religious Laws – the sacrificial and ceremonial Laws which detailed the sacrifices God required and the way these sacrifices were to be carried out. This one set of 'Laws' covered all aspects and all levels of government for the whole nation - both civil and religious.

Whilst it is sometimes difficult to categorise a particular law, as we will discuss in more detail later, it is generally agreed that the Law is divided into these three main areas. There is no scriptural division, or naming of the areas, but generally they are referred to as:

- moral,
- civil, and
- ceremonial.

It is interesting to note that most of the great theologians over time have agreed on this division. For example Thomas Aquinas – wrote in around 1270: "*We must*

Judaism & the Law

In Jewish tradition each commandment or law is known as a *mitzvah* - according to the Talmud there are 613 commandments in the Torah: 248 positive, 365 negative and 7 legislated by the rabbis of antiquity. Positive commandments require and action to be performed to bring the person closer to God. Negative commandments forbid a specific action because violations place distance between the person and God.

The Laws can also be divided into two categories:

- laws in relation to God, and
- laws about relationships with other people.

Interestingly, Judaism also has three levels of sin:

- *Pesha* - an act committed in clear and deliberate defiance of God;
- *Avon* - lustful sin and uncontrollable emotion - this sin is not done in deliberate defiance of God, but the sinner does know what he is doing is wrong; and
- *Chet* - which is unintentional sin.

therefore distinguish three kinds of precept in the Old Law; viz. 'moral' precepts, which are dictated by the natural law; 'ceremonial' precepts, which are determinations of the Divine worship; and 'judicial' precepts, which are determinations of the justice to be maintained among men," (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 2a, Question 99, Article 4)

In the final chapter of *The Institutes* Calvin writes : "We must attend to the well-known division which distributes the whole law of God, as promulgated by Moses, into the moral, the ceremonial, and the judicial law," (Hesselink I J, *Calvin's Concept of the Law*, Pickwick, 1992, page 102).

Similarly, Francis Turretin, one of Calvin's successors at Geneva in the middle years of the seventeenth century, has written: "*The law given by Moses is usually distinguished into three species: moral (treating of morals or of perpetual duties towards God and our neighbour); ceremonial (of the ceremonies or rites about the sacred things to be observed under the Old Testament); and civil (constituting the civil government of the Israelite people),*" (Turretin, F, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 11.24.1).

When referring to the Laws, people often think of the Ten Commandments. These of course were only a part of the Law. Some believe that the Ten Commandments have a special status because they were originally written by the finger of God on the tablets of stone. In some ways they can be thought of as a core summary of the others, with the remainder of the laws supporting or interpreting these core instructions or values. Specific laws include instructions about the following:

- health issues,
- holiness,

- sacrifices,
- sexual practices and procreation,
- marriage,
- hygiene and clothing,
- food – clean and unclean meats,
- the Sabbath and the Sanctuary,
- care of the poor and handicapped,
- the treatment of neighbours and servants,
- reverence of God,
- justice,
- against idolatry,
- against memorializing the dead,
- feasts and worship,
- treatment of other nations,
- the treatment of parents,
- the treatment of animals,
- agriculture,
- witchcraft and divination, and
- the Levitical Priesthood.

Many Christian theologians, based particularly on their interpretation of Paul's writings, say that 'the Law' has been done away with. They will suggest that whilst Christians should still observe the moral Law including the Ten Commandments, the ceremonial Law was fulfilled in Jesus, and the civil applied only to Israel when it was a nation. At a high level this sounds a reasonable approach, and the principle is correct. Our salvation comes through faith in Jesus, and 'keeping the law' cannot save us without the sacrifice He



made. However a difficulty arises when we try to make a division between moral, ceremonial, and civil Laws. There is often no clear demarcation about which category a law will fit into, and, in fact, a lot of laws will fit squarely into multiple categories.

Take, for example, the food Laws. The food laws firstly make a distinction between animals which may be eaten and animals which are not to be eaten. These are generally known as the clean and unclean meats. People cite the experience of Peter in Acts chapters 10 and 11, and say that God has made all meat clean – and no doubt He has for those who wish to believe that – but Peter explained the meaning of his vision in Acts 10:34, *“Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.”* However, other evidence suggests that there was probably some physically related reason why God had recommended not eating these animals or foods and that has not changed. Was the distinction made by God ‘just for fun’ to impose some restraints on the Israelites, or was there a ‘real reason’ for making this distinction? Perhaps there are different ways in which these animals internally process their food which makes them ‘clean,’ perhaps there are different foods that they eat that cause them to be categorised as ‘clean’ or

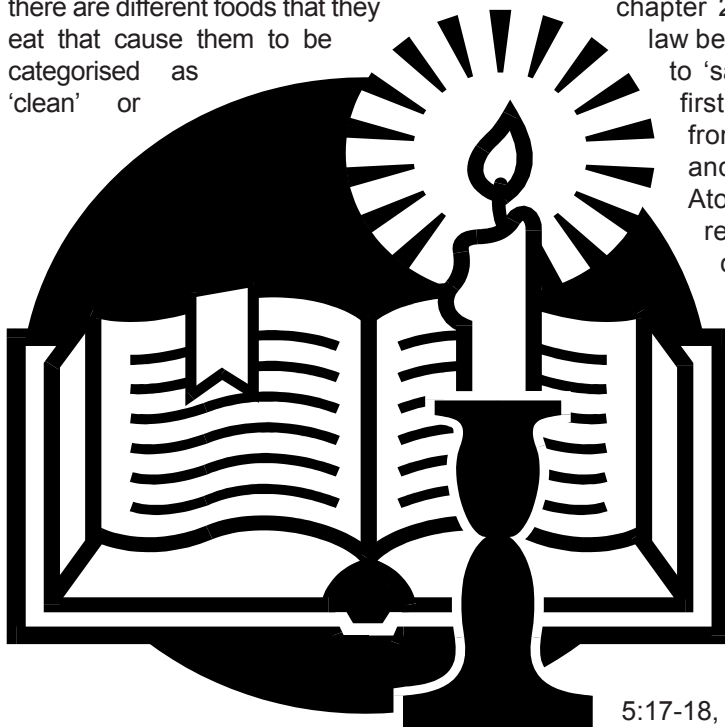
‘unclean,’ and if so those distinctions would still apply. It is difficult to accept the argument that this division of recommended foods was part of the sacrificial law OR that it was part of the ceremonial law - and if not it must have been part of the moral law in which case it would still apply!

The law required that any person *“which hunteth and catcheth any beast or fowl that may be eaten; he shall even pour out the blood thereof, and cover it with dust,”* Leviticus 17:13. Now is this a ceremonial law because it has to do with shedding of blood, or is it a civil law because it has to do with health and containment of possible spreading of disease, or is it moral because God also clearly stated that the Israelites were not to eat blood, and this has to do with the well-being of our bodies? In fact even the Disciples believed that not eating blood was something that should be incumbent on Christians (see Acts 15:19-20).

As another example, take the Law of Worship which said that the Israelites were to appear before the Lord in Jerusalem three times every year – Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles (see Leviticus chapter 23). Was this a ceremonial

law because the timing was related to ‘sacrifices’ (the slaying of the firstborn of Egypt, the offering from the bounty of the harvest, and the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement), or was it a civil law relating to Public Holidays and civil activities, or was there a moral component based on the need to make the commitment to worship God and meet and have fellowship with others to give opportunity for the sharing of ideas and development of a tight communal relationship with God and with each other?

Remember Jesus Himself said in Matthew 5:17-18, *“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I*



am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.” It is true that He fulfilled the ceremonial laws, and all aspects to do with sacrifice and the associated process of worship, but the question is how do we clarify which laws this referred to? The others should still remain as instructions from God for us to follow.

It is also noteworthy that when Jesus gave the ‘New Commandment’ (John 13:34), He was really quoting the Old Testament (Leviticus 19:18) - this is perhaps why John said in 1st John 2:7-8, *“Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.”*

It should be kept in mind that God gave the Law to Israel to show a lifestyle that would set them apart from others (Exodus 19:5). Moses had said that in the keeping of these laws there would be life (Romans 10:5). We believe that the Laws set out a lifestyle that supports physical longevity as well as spiritual. The ultimate hope set before Israel was that they would live (physically) and not die (Deuteronomy 30:19).

However, Peter described the Law as being *“a yoke...which neither our fathers or we were able to bear,”* Acts 15:10.

With the coming of Jesus came also the hope of the resurrection - *“...though he were dead, yet shall he live,”* John 11:25. This was a spiritual hope - not related to the hope of physical life without death. To receive this hope there was need for faith – something belonging to the non-physical realm – as opposed to obedience to a set of physical laws. So for those seeking the glory of the resurrection there is no need to keep the Laws, but for those seeking for physical immortality there is still a requirement to follow the physical lifestyle set out in the Laws of the Old Testament.

With regards the sacrificial laws, these were a type of Jesus’ sacrifice and were fulfilled in Him. As Paul said in Hebrews

10:3-4, *“But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.”*

It is also interesting to note that as the Old Testament progressed many of the prophets began to realise the ineffectiveness of sacrifice compared to obedience. Sacrifice was admitted because of disobedience, but obedience transcended the need for sacrifice. Take for example the words of Samuel to Saul in 1st Samuel 15:22, *“Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”*

These words are echoed by Hosea 6:6, where God says, *“For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.”*

The same sentiment appears also in Proverbs 21:3, *“To do justice and judgment [is] more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.”*

In essence if we were given power from God to be obedient the need for sacrifice would be transcended (Deuteronomy 5:29). However, whilst we may hold this goal of perfection, at present it is a condition that we may only seek to achieve and something we understand will be fulfilled in God’s chosen people just prior to the return of Jesus Christ to this world.

So, in conclusion, whilst the Laws can be divided into those relating to the ceremony of the sacrificial requirements, those which relate to civil matters and those relating to moral laws, it is very difficult with many laws to make a clear distinction as to which category the law fits into. Whilst the categorisation of some laws is clear, it would appear that with many laws there are aspects which apply in each category. Clearly those laws or aspects of laws which relate to sacrifice were fulfilled in Jesus, but we believe that the remainder are still set there by God for our good and should be followed either directly or in a way applicable to our society today.

“O how I love thy law! this is my meditation all the day,” Psalm 119:97. 📖

Forms of Sacrifice practiced by Israel

by Lynne GRAY

The most detailed list of Old Testament sacrifices is given in the book of Leviticus, which is understood to be the book that contains the priestly code. In the book of Leviticus we have various forms of sacrifices described to atone for various misdemeanours. Sacrifice was an essential part of worship for Israel - the presentation of something of monetary or material value to God reinforced the reality of God in Israel's relationship with and to Him. The act of the recognition of sin and the need for atonement for that sin through forms of sacrifice shows an acknowledgement that God was in control of their lives, that they needed God in their lives, and that God, at times, intervened in powerful ways in the life of Israel. The act of sacrifice is one of interaction with God and response to God – the basis of any relationship. Sacrifice, for the early Israelites was a form of worship, practiced dually with its companion, that being the feasts/festivals.

The book of Leviticus has three recurring themes that are pertinent to the study of sacrifices and feasts:

- the first major theme in the book of Leviticus is God's Presence and the reality of God's Presence being truly with His people, Israel – this reflects a holistic view of life for Israel;
- the second theme is that God is holy – there is none other like God. As God is different, so Israel is to be different for they are the chosen people of God. Holiness, with regards Israel as detailed in Leviticus, does not mean a separateness, but rather Israel is to reflect God's holiness, and for this reason Leviticus details various ordinances regarding lifestyle issues (Leviticus chapters 11-16); and
- the third theme of the book of Leviticus is purity and an important element in dealing with impurity was sacrifice.

Israel's worship of God was exclusive and aniconic (without appeal to images) which eventuated in monotheism. The defining aspect of Israel's relationship of worship to God is the practice of the covenant as given to Israel by God through Moses – the covenant enables affirmation, maintenance, renewal, and revivification of the covenant. The covenant was an important element in the relationship between God and Israel.

Originally Israel erected sanctuaries in various places for the purpose of worship to God (by means of sacrifice, festival meals, prayers and praise), but towards the end of the seventh century the tribe of Judah worshipped God solely at the Temple in Jerusalem. Sacrifice in early biblical times was spontaneous and unregimented – look at the sacrifices that Cain and Abel offered, there is no record of any regimentation involved at this stage, but rather spontaneity – if you wanted to sacrifice and worship God you did so when and where you wanted to. Speaking generally, the laws of sacrifice developed as a means of attending to the needs of the resident deity and to dispose of material that that deity found offensive; the former concern resulted in the sacrificial system, the latter in a concern for purity.

The laws of sacrifice as given in Leviticus, presume a sacramental mentality that shows a complete faith and belief (a conviction) in the manifestation of God's presence in this world (Exodus 20:24). The sacrifices serve three important intentions for Israel:

- Sacrifice is the presentation of a gift – this thereby acknowledges God as the quintessential Giver. God has given Israel all that they have and in response to that generosity and graciousness, Israel now gives back to God. The perfect gift 'without blemish' binds the worshipper to God.
- The sacrifice of animals and vegetables offers the occasion for a communal

meal (a feast) – this makes the sacrifice then an act of communion wherein Israel may enjoy the company of God (Exodus 24:11) and each other. The sharing of the meal shows solidarity and unitedness. Even in the New Testament the sharing of a meal is seen as the quintessential social occasion. Therefore sacrifice may be viewed as a form of communion wherein Israel may enjoy the company of God. The sharing of a meal showed unitedness amongst Israel, and envisaged for the future ongoing solidarity in the relationship between Israel and God.

- Sacrifice could also be an act of expiation, such as the sin offering and guilt offering which acted as a means of purgation or purification to restore the relationship between God and the covenant-breaker. Sacrifice was a way for Israel to return to communion with God after having been disobedient or having violated holiness in some way. The gesture of sacrifice is a reaching out by Israel to atone, through a priest, to God for their sinful acts and return into communion with God.

The principal forms of sacrifice that are legislated in the book of Leviticus are:

- the **burnt** offering (Leviticus chapter 1) whereby any clean bird or animal may be offered;
- the **meal or cereal** offering (Leviticus 2:1-16) which did not involve the sacrifice of an animal;
- the **peace** offering (Leviticus chapter 3 and 7:11-34) wherein only certain parts of the animal are burnt and the remainder prepared and shared in a communal meal;
- the **sin** offering (Leviticus 4:1-5:13;

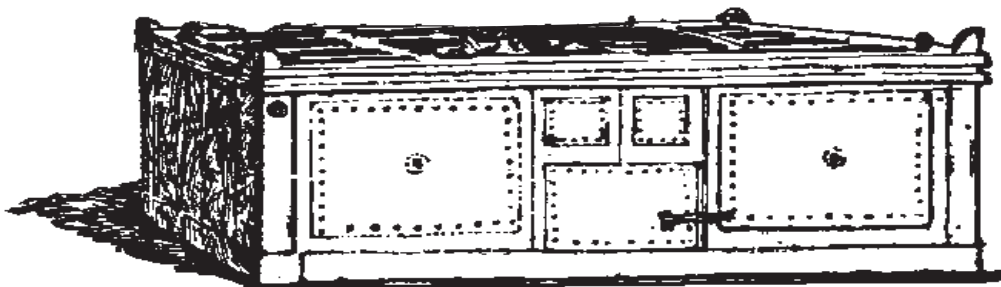
6:24-30; 8:14-17; 16:3-22) which was required when the commandments were unintentionally broken; and

- the **guilt** offering which may also be referred to as a restoration offering (Leviticus 5:14-6:7; 7:1-6).

Note here though, that deliberate sins are excluded from the sphere of sacrifice.

This article will examine the sacrifices, how they were performed, what they attempted, and what they achieved (a separate article will look at how Jesus Christ was the fulfilment of these sacrifices for mankind in general).

The Burnt Offering – this was a voluntary sacrifice, unlike the obligatory sacrifices that come after it. Only domestic animals were to be used for sacrificial purposes, ie., from the herd or the flock as these were considered to be owned by man, whereas wild animals were owned by God. Burnt offerings could be chosen from the herd (Leviticus 1:3), the flock (Leviticus 1:10), or the birds (Leviticus 1:14) - clean and domesticated animals do not prey on other animals nor live by killing. It was desecration to offer an unclean animal at the altar of the Lord. For the burnt offering the entire offering was burnt and it was understood that the smoke and aroma from that offering would ascend as a pleasing odour to God. The burnt offering is the oldest and most common form of sacrifice, as well as the most spontaneous. If you felt moved upon to sacrifice, then you sacrificed – if man felt estranged from God then he sacrificed to atone for that estrangement. The burnt offering is the only sacrifice that required the entire animal to be burnt and only male animals without blemish (ie., perfect) could be used. Aaron and his sons formed the priesthood of Israel, and they



were the ones who offered the sacrifices. In summary burnt offerings could be chosen from:

- the herd (Leviticus 1:3);
- the flock (Leviticus 1:10); or
- the birds (Leviticus 1:14).

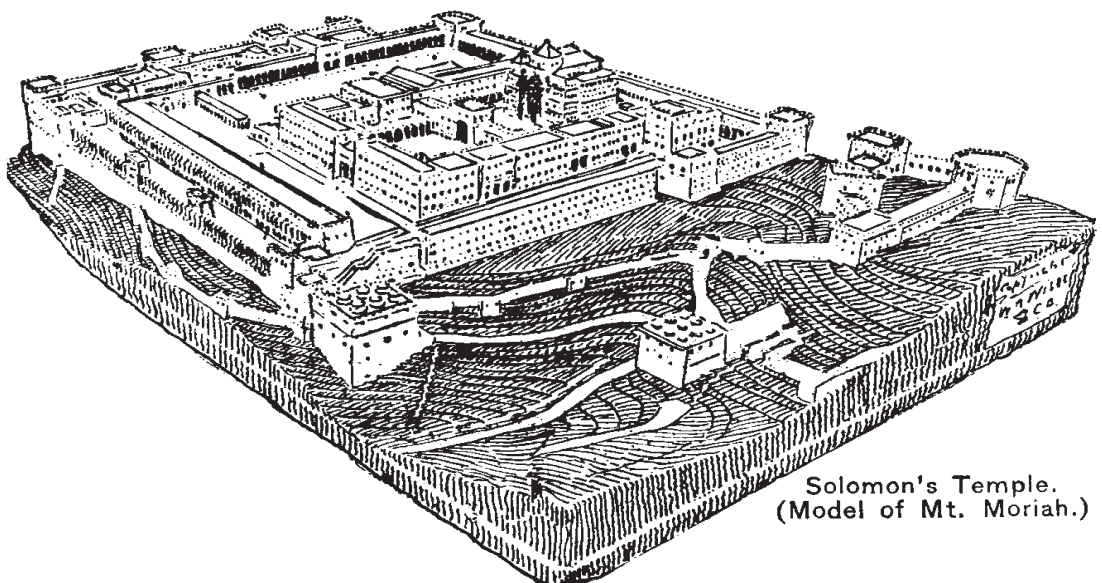
The intention of the burnt offering was to give God a pleasing odour (Leviticus 1:9,13,17; 2:9), and it was wholly offered to God.

The Meal or Cereal Offering – often an accompaniment to burnt and peace offerings. This sacrifice carries with it a propitiatory sense (to regain the favour of, to appease). With the grain offerings, choice flour was to be offered with oil and frankincense to be burnt, but only a handful of the flour and oil mixture, but all of the frankincense was to be burnt. Why frankincense? Frankincense is the emblem of devotion – *“Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice,”* Psalm 141:2. The remainder of the flour and oil was to be given to Aaron and his sons for their personal use (Leviticus 2:1). The formula for all of the grain offerings - the baked grain offering was made unleavened and spread with oil. The priest would remove a token portion and burn it on the altar, with the remainder being for Aaron and his sons. There was to be no leaven included in the ingredients of a grain offering as you must

not turn leaven or honey into smoke as an offering by fire (Leviticus 2:11). Honey and leaven may be brought to the altar as an offering of choice products but it is not to be offered on the altar as a ‘pleasing odour.’ With all offerings, salt was to be offered also - salt represents the covenant God made with Israel (Leviticus 2:13) and amongst most ancient peoples it was a sign of friendship to eat salt together. There was also a grain offering of firstfruits which was new grain from fresh ears, parched with fire – to this was added oil and frankincense, and again a token portion of the grain and oil was burnt with all the frankincense, and the remainder was for Aaron and his sons. This was shared between the Priest and God, representing a bridge between God and mankind.

The Peace Offering (also known as the sacrifice of well being) – by itself it was considered an expiatory offering (reconciliation and atonement) and when associated with the cereal offering it was considered a rite of propitiation and reconciliation. The offering for this sacrifice must be a male or female without blemish and may be taken from either the herd or the flock. There were specific parts of the anatomy of these animals that were to be burnt:

- the herd - the fat that covers the entrails,



Solomon's Temple.
(Model of Mt. Moriah.)

the fat around the entrails, the kidneys, the liver;

- the flock - the whole broad tail, the fat that covers the entrails, the fat around the entrails, the two kidneys and their fat, the appendage of the liver; and for the goat - the fat
- covering the entrails, the fat around the entrails, the 2 kidneys and the appendage of the liver.

What was left was for Aaron and his sons. In Leviticus 3:16 we have a perpetual statute stated that Israel must **not eat any fat or any blood** – all fat is the Lord's. This sacrifice provided food for the Priest, God's human representative.

The Sin Offering – The type of animal offered depends upon the status of the person making the offering. This offering was similar to the guilt offering in that it covered some form of ceremonial defilement and it applied to deception or misappropriation (Leviticus 6:1) and seduction (Leviticus 19:20). It could be said that this offering refers to offenses against God, where the guilt offering is referring to offenses against mankind within their social environment. This sacrifice was for atonement, but could not be offered before honouring God and respecting His mediator.

The Sin offering also included the Sacrifice of Unintentional Sin for Israel in general, and for this sacrifice the same parts of the offering are burnt as with the Peace Offering but with extras: the skin, all its flesh, its head, legs, entrails and dung. The offering was to be carried to a clean place outside the camp to the ash heap and burnt on a wood fire (Leviticus 4:10-12). The offering was on behalf of the whole congregation of Israel. For the Sacrifice of Unintentional Sin a priest must offer on behalf of the people a bull of the herd without blemish as a sin offering. This Sacrifice serves 3 different purposes of atonement for unintentional sin:

- for Israel in general;
- for a ruler or king; or
- for ordinary individuals.

The elders of Israel slaughtered the bull

for the offering. If the sacrifice is being made for atonement for Unintentional sin of a ruler or king, the priest again acts as mediator between God and the ruler/king, and a male goat is offered without blemish. It is interesting to note that the act of forgiveness is never questioned - with the act of sacrifice Israel is assured that they are forgiven, no question (Leviticus 4:26). Note also that on both occasions (for Israel generally and for rulers or kings) the offering is to be a male bull or goat.

There is one last category of offerings for Unintentional Sin and that is the offering given to the priest by ordinary individuals. In this case the offering is to be a female goat or a female sheep, without blemish, and the priest makes atonement on the person's behalf with this Unintentional Sin offering. The concept of 'Unintentional Sin' and what this covers is interesting - unintentional sin covers, for example, misdemeanours such as:

- touching an unclean thing in ignorance (Leviticus 5:2);
- touching human uncleanness in ignorance (Leviticus 5:3);
- uttering aloud a rash oath for a bad or good purpose in ignorance (Leviticus 5:4).

For an individual to atone for any of these types of sins the penalty was a female to be taken from the flock (either a sheep or a goat). For those less fortunate, and not as well off as other members of Israel, the facility was made that their offering may be of lesser monetary value, but no less sacrificial value, by being 2 turtledoves or 2 pigeons – 2 because 1 was to be a sin offering and the other a burnt offering. For those who couldn't afford turtledoves or pigeons, the sin offering could be made up of one tenth of an ephah of flour with no oil or frankincense – so no matter how poor you were you could still give a sin offering for atonement. The priest, as stated earlier, would burn a token offering and the remainder was for the consumption of the priesthood. This way, the priesthood who had no income, land for cultivation, crops, or any way of providing themselves with an income, were kept by the community as far as food and clothing went, but this also acknowledged

that the priests were vital mediators in the relationship between Israel and God.

The Guilt Offering - This is the only offering that includes deliberate moral offenses among the actions it seeks to remedy, eg., fraud and robbery. Reparation must be made, plus twenty per cent, to the victim, and then a ram or lamb is sacrificed with the flesh being eaten by the priests (Leviticus 7:6). It also covered sacrifices given for the purification of a woman after childbirth (Leviticus 12:1) and this is the sacrifice reported by Luke (Luke 2:22-24) that Mary took two turtle doves to the temple for sacrificial purposes.

There were some items that were never to be burnt upon the altar: **leaven** because it was considered as a symbol of fermentation and corruption and **honey** because heathen cults considered it the favourite food of their gods. The Israelites' believing that this prohibition freed the mind of the Israelite of the notion that the sacrifice was food for God, but rather it was just a pleasing odour. Also there were some items that were never to be devoured by man – both the blood of the sacrifice and the fat of the sacrifice.

Provision in the sacrificial laws was made for income – the wealthy of Israel could afford bullocks, rams, etc., but the poorer of Israel were allowed to purchase turtle-doves. Interestingly the dove is one of the few birds that when attacked does not fight back. This is why it is so popular as a metaphor and analogy for the early Christian church, and why this bird is associated with peace. God is not interested in the cost of the sacrifice, but rather the spirit in which that sacrifice is given. In fact the passivity of the class of animals that were allowed for sacrifice shows a meekness and lack of aggression similar to the dove (sheep, lambs, goats, etc) – the clean animals are all non-aggressive beasts and are herbivorous.

In summary:

- The **Burnt Offering** was an expression of the individual's surrender to the will of God – Jesus was the fulfilment of this sacrifice as He surrendered completely

to the will of His Father;

- The **Meal Offering** typified the consecration of man's work to the service of God – Jesus was the fulfilment of this sacrifice as He left us an example of how to live a God focussed life and how to live in a community with God as the focus;
- The **Peace Offering** was a display of gratitude for God's mercy and bounty to Israel – Jesus was the fulfilment of this sacrifice as He surrendered completely for all of mankind to show God how grateful mankind was to the Creator, and to bring them back into a 'right' relationship with God;
- The **Sin Offering** and Guilt Offerings were offerings made to display guilt and sorrow at having deviated from God's path, with the offering showing the firm resolve of the person sacrificing to be reconciled to God (repentance) – Jesus was the fulfilment of this sacrifice as through His death, the sins of all are forgiven.

There is another form of legislated sacrifice that is not recorded in Leviticus, but rather it is in the Book of Numbers chapter 19 – the sacrifice of the 'Red Heifer'. This sacrifice was a purification sacrifice providing, with the products of the sacrifice, the materials by which a person could remove defilement resulting from contact with the dead. The red heifer was one of the few female animals that the Law commanded to be sacrificed. The water of purification that was used in the red heifer sacrifice had very special qualities. The water of purification solution contained ashes from the red heifer which was combined with cedar, hyssop and scarlet thread. Hyssop oil is an effective antiseptic and antibacterial agent and cedar oil came from a kind of juniper tree native to Israel and Sinai, that when applied would irritate the skin and encourage the person to rub the solution in. Considering that the red heifer sacrifice was a purification ceremony to cleanse someone who had become defiled by touching a dead body, here we have a form of hygiene associated with the cleansing of that defilement -

antibacterial and antiseptic herbs that will definitely cleanse any physical impurity, i.e., disinfecting. This sacrifice symbolically points to Jesus Christ – He is the one who cleanses us of our sins. In the red heifer sacrifice the High Priest was unclean until evening. The red heifer was sacrificed outside the camp, just as Jesus was sacrificed outside of the city of Jerusalem.

Finally, on the Day of Atonement, the Israelites had the ceremony of the release of the 'scapegoat' (Leviticus 16), wherein two male goats were chosen from the flock, and after Aaron cast lots, one goat was sacrificed as a sin offering for atonement of the people, the second goat was known as the scapegoat. Aaron laid both hands upon the live goat and confessed over the goat all the sins of the children of Israel. These sins were placed on the head of the goat and the goat was then released into the wilderness so it could not wander back. It became common practice within Judaism to tie a red strip of cloth (representing the sins of the people and the blood of atonement) to the scapegoat. The Talmuds record that the red strip would eventually turn white, showing God's acceptance of the offering. *"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool,"* Isaiah 1:18.

Jesus was the final sin offering and scapegoat, for all mankind. Amazingly the Talmuds verify this, for after the crucifixion of Jesus, God no longer accepted the sin offering and the scapegoat: "Forty years before the Temple was destroyed (30 A.D.) the chosen lot was not picked with the right hand, nor did the crimson stripe turn white, nor did the westernmost light burn; and the doors of the Temple's Holy Place swung open by themselves, until Rabbi Yochanon ben Zakkai spoke saying: 'O most Holy Place, why have you become disturbed? I know full well that your destiny will be destruction, for the prophet Zechariah ben Iddo has already spoken regarding you saying: 'Open thy

doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour the cedars,' Zechariah. 11:1," [Talmud Bavli, Yoma 39b].

"But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come...neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us...and almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission...So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation...For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins...By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all...this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God... For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified...saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin," Hebrews 9:11,12,22,28; 10:4,10,12,14,16,17. The words to Christian Israelite Hymn No. 69 tell the story:

**Thou the great Redeemer died
The curse for to remove,
Thou for sin wast crucified,
That all may know Thy love;
Thou thine Isre'l wilt redeem,
And cast the great accuser down;
Then will songs of holy theme
Make heav'n and earth resound.**

**Thou the Lamb who once was slain
To bring redemption in,
On this earth Thou here wilt reign,
And make an end of sin:
Prove the justice of Thy cause,
Thy full dominion to extend;
O'er the earth proclaim Thy laws,
And make all nations bend.📖**

Jesus Christ Foreshadowed in the Sacrifices of Israel

by Kerion FELLOWES

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the atonement of the sins of all mankind is the pivotal event for the entire theological basis of Christianity. This was not an event which was random and without precedent.

The Old Testament clearly demonstrates that the sacrificial laws and rituals of the Israel of God were precursors to the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

The earliest sacrifices in the Bible are recorded in Genesis 4:3,4 with the sacrifice given by Cain and Abel.

“And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering.”

Examination of the Old Testament illustrates a progression in the degree to which the atoning effect of the sacrifices covered an ever increasing number of people:

- in Genesis Abel offered a lamb to the Lord as a sacrifice for himself – one lamb for one man;
- when the children

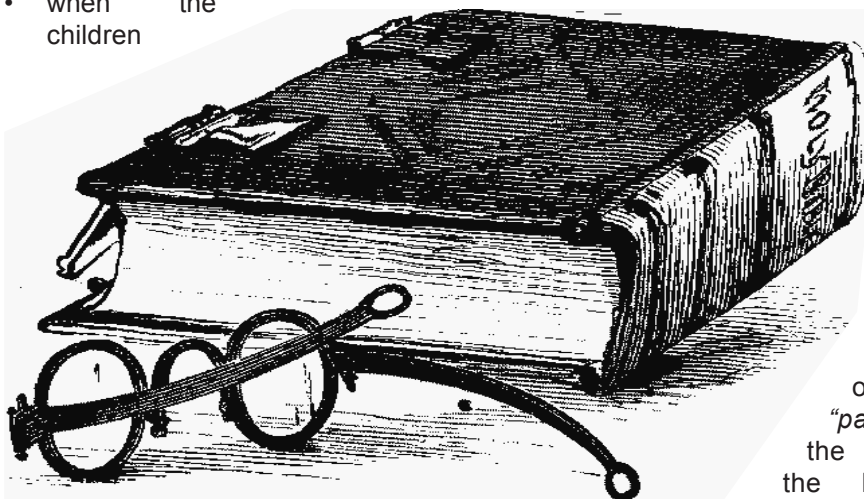
of Israel were in Egypt, Moses instructed that every family had to offer a lamb as a sacrifice to the Lord; one lamb for one household – one lamb for one family/household, this also included servants, etc., (Exodus 12:3); and,

- in the New Testament one sacrifice was made all encompassing as John the Baptist proclaimed *“Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world,”* John 1:29 – one lamb for the whole world.

When Jesus came, it was God who substituted His own provision, a Lamb for the people. A precursor to this substitution was seen in Abraham’s sacrifice of the lamb caught in the briars (Genesis chapter 22) to be offered instead of his only son Isaac. The Lord, who had asked Abraham for the sacrifice, provided the lamb in the place of Isaac. God, through Jesus Christ, provided His own Lamb for the sin sacrifice.

The Lamb of God is dramatically revealed in Exodus chapters 12 and 13, with the Jewish Feast of the Passover. This event and feast is the most compelling precursor of the coming of the Lamb of God - Jesus Christ - and His role as the ultimate

sacrifice for all of mankind’s sins. The Passover Feast occurs each year on the 14th day of the Jewish month of Nisan. It is eaten in remembrance of the Lord “passing over” the houses of the Israelites who



had sacrificed the Passover Lamb and sprinkled its blood on their wooden doorposts and mantles in accordance with the instructions of the Lord through Moses. The angel of death visited those who had not sprinkled the blood of the lamb and was the final of ten plagues sent by God to redeem His people from slavery in Egypt.

There are many different ways in which the sacrifices before Jesus Christ were types and shadows of the greatest and final sacrifice.

First, just as happened to Jesus, the sacrificial animal was chosen and anointed by the laying on of hands. The Hebrew title *'Messiah'* and the Greek title *'Christos'* both mean *'the Anointed One.'*

Second, the sacrifice had to be clean and worthy. The Gospels detail the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist at the River Jordan. John foretold the coming of the Saviour when he informed the gathered crowds that he only baptised with water but that soon he would be followed by one who baptised with the Holy Ghost (Luke 3:16). Not only was Jesus thoroughly washed in order to be an acceptable sacrifice to the Lord but He was then anointed by the Holy Ghost (Luke 3:22; 4:1; Matthew 3:16). *"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, In whom I am well pleased,"* Matthew 3:16, 17.

Third, the sacrifice had to be without blemish - totally free from all physical flaws, complete, whole, and perfect. *"But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,"* 1st Peter 1:19, 20. The miraculous conception of Jesus through the power of the the Holy Ghost coming upon Mary and the Power of the Highest overshadowing Mary, ensured that Jesus was born without any inherited sin or physical imperfections. Jesus was wholly

consecrated unto the Lord as demonstrated by the fact He fulfilled all of the Mosaic law by being presented to the Lord as a child and then redeemed by His parents by being circumcised according to the law. The focus of Jesus' life was towards God from a very early age - remember when Jesus was found at the Temple when he was a child?

Fourth, the chosen sacrifice was to have its life's blood spilt. This happened when Jesus was on the cross and the soldier pierced his side with a spear.

Fifth, the sacrifice had to be domesticated; that is, not wild but tame and of help to man (see Leviticus 1:2-3, 10; 22:21). Jesus was led as a lamb to the slaughter.

Sixth, from the original sacrifices performed at the time of Adam in Genesis through to the most common form of sacrifice in the law of Moses, the animal had to be the firstborn and were generally male (Exodus 12:5; Leviticus 1:3; 22:18-25).

Seven, the sacrifice of grain had to be ground into flour and made into breadstuffs to feed the priests. This condition of the sacrificial laws reminds us that Jesus was called *'the bread of life'* (John 6:48), and gives us *'food to eat.'*

Eighth, the first-fruits that were offered remind us that Christ was the first fruits of the Resurrection. *"And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,"* Revelation 1:5.

Exodus and Leviticus describe in great detail the construction of a tabernacle (later, the temple) and the sacrifices required to atone for sin. *"...without shedding of blood is no remission,"* we are reminded in Hebrews 9:22.

But the New Testament describes how Jesus, as *"the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world,"* John 1:29, *poured out his blood* for the forgiveness of sins (Matthew 26:28), once for all and for all time (Hebrews 10:10). *"And they*

sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation,” Revelation 5:9.

The Letter to the Hebrews explains how Jesus is the fulfilment of the Law. In himself, Jesus Christ fulfilled the sacrificial laws that Israel had been instructed to keep through the ages.

“Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience,” Hebrews 9:6-9.

Hebrews 9:12, *“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”*

Just as Jesus fulfilled God’s moral laws in His perfect life, He fulfilled God’s ceremonial law in His sacrificial death! It is only through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the shedding of the blood on the Cross that we can truly be found worthy to enter in to the presence of the Lord our God!

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” John 3:14-16. 📖

Hymn No. 120

(2nd Esdras 13:5, 8, 10-12, 27, 35, 39-40; 2:42-43)

When Isr’el’s tribes with Baal did stray,
And from God’s law depart;
For them, Elijah, he did pray
That God might turn their heart.

But Malachi, of later date,
The Messenger proclaim’d,
With the new Cov’nant for to go,
As by that prophet named.

To this standard they here did flow,
As mov’d by holy fire;
In all their zeal and love to show,
They did that truth desire.

From the fiery test of this law,
The truth it was despis’d:
That great multitude here below
Against that truth did rise.

In their anger they did desire
That Man of God to slay;
Until by streams of purging fire,
They all did melt away.

Upon that mountain, great and high,
That Messenger appear’d;
To Him the tribes did all draw nigh,
The words of peace they heard.

Then all that multitude of strife
Did vanish from the earth;
Not worthy to obtain that life
Which brings immortal birth.

At last was found a peaceful throng,
Seal’d in the law of love;
And all the themes of holy song
Ascend to God above.

They, by that great, Anointed Son,
Are crown’d with life and light;
And then with Him they are made one,
In all His glory bright.

From that throne on high, the Spirit
Of all truth is come down;
For all Isr’el to inherit
That bright, immortal crown.

Statement of Belief

The Christian Israelite Church beliefs can be fully supported by the Scriptures.

Here is an outline:

We believe...

- In God Almighty creator of all things (Genesis 1:1).
- In the existence of Satan, the Devil, in whom God allowed iniquity to be placed (James 2:19; Ezekiel 28:14,15).
- That God created a spirit-existence in which the devil manifested evil and caused some of the spirits to rebel against God (Isaiah 14:12-14; Jude 6).
- That God created our physical world, to which each person comes with a body and a soul made alive by a spirit from the spiritual creation (Luke 9:55; Genesis 2:7).
- That God gave His people instructions on the way they should live, which instructions were "for their good always" (Deuteronomy 6:24).
- That all have sinned and come "short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23; 2nd Corinthians 5:19).
- That God has reconciled the (whole) world to Himself through the sacrifice of Jesus (John 3:16,17).
- That through belief in the sacrifice of Jesus believers are counted as righteous before God, and can be assured of the resurrection of their souls (a Spiritual body) at Jesus' return (1st Timothy 4:10; 1st Corinthians 15:44).
- That there will be a small number who will fully prove their faith by a work of true obedience to God's instructions and will thereby receive the prize of the highest calling of God, the redemption of spirit and soul and body - this living mortal Body made Immortal without seeing death (1st Thessalonians 5:23; Revelation 14:1-5; Hebrews 11:39,40).
- That Jesus Christ will return to this earth again, subdue the power of Satan and reign forever and ever (Revelation chapters 19 and 20).
- That the return of Jesus Christ is near and we are living in the period described in Scripture as the latter days (Matthew chapter 24; Mark chapter 13 and Luke chapter 21).
- That there are promises in the Scriptures especially to Israel - God's chosen people (1st Peter 2:9).
- That although Israel of old did not accept the challenge of spiritually being God's peculiar people, a remnant of their descendants will come forward in the latter days to fulfill the obligations and receive the promises (Revelation 7:1-8).
- That the Mission of the Christian Israelite Church is to awaken the lost ten tribes of Israel to this special inheritance to be the physical Immortal "Bride of the Lamb" and to be the vehicle for the task of bringing them all together at God's appointed time (Matthew 10:5,6; Revelation 19).

We believe that God is the absolute Judge and Arbiter and that we as His servants have an obligation to respond to what He puts in each heart, and that whilst we seek to proclaim and discuss our beliefs, we have no right to contend with other people about them.

Children's Story: The Greatest Gift Ever!

by Hannah GRAY

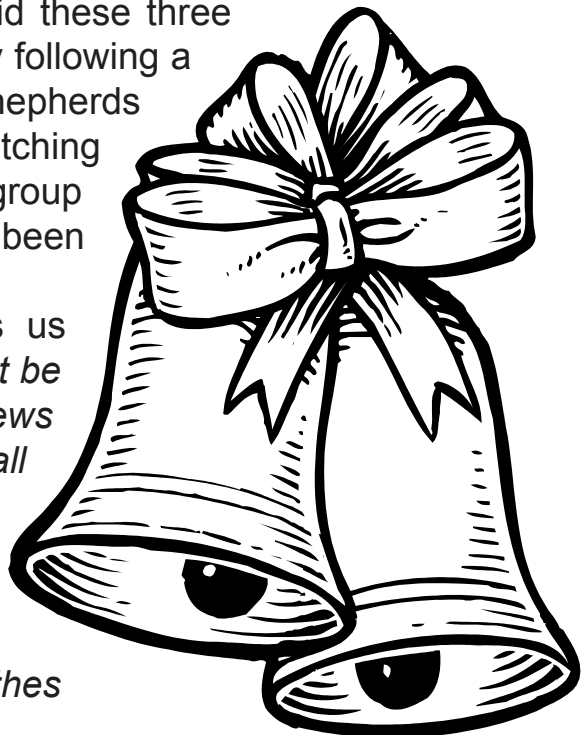
Have a think for a moment about what the best Christmas present you have ever received was? Maybe a new dolls house, a new bike, a game you really wanted or maybe even a new pair of shoes!

You know what the greatest gift I ever received was? The gift that God sent us; His son Jesus.

I am sure you all know the story of Jesus' birth – that is why we celebrate Christmas, isn't it? – but have you ever stopped to think about how Jesus' birth was a gift? And possibly one of the greatest gifts you will ever receive? How amazing is that?

The birth of Jesus was so special, that three wise men followed a star to find where he was born to give him gifts. The book of Matthew tells us that these three wise men bought Jesus gifts of gold, myrrh and incense (three very valuable things back in those days). Not only did these three wise men travel a long way following a star to see Jesus, but the shepherds who were out in the field watching their sheep were told by a group of angels that Jesus had been born.

The book of Luke tells us that the angels said, *Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord... you will find a baby wrapped in clothes and lying in a manger.*

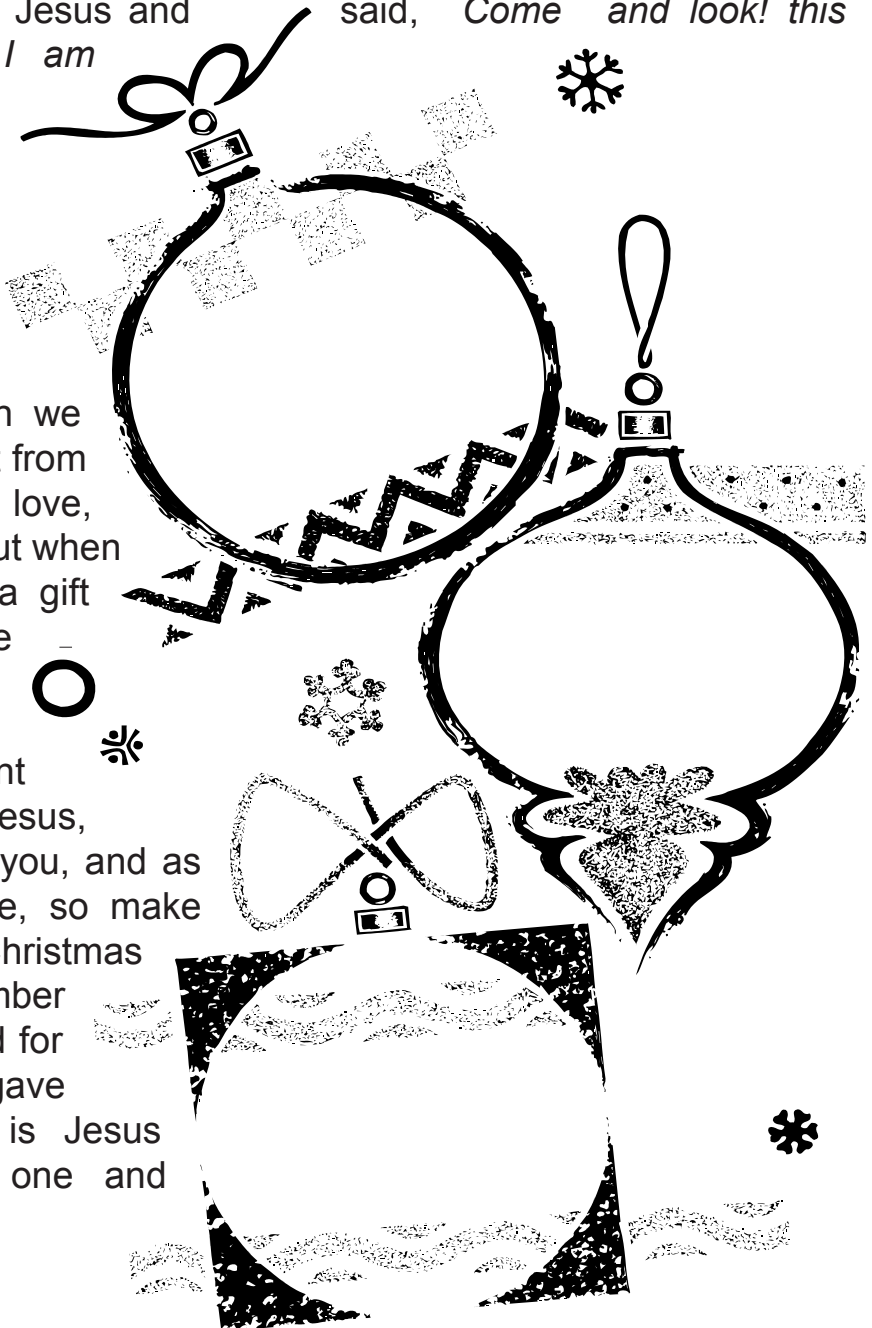


So even the shepherds left their job to see this bundle of joy!
So many people – the wise men, the shepherds – went to see the
new born baby Jesus. What an amazing gift!

It's like when you get a gift that you really like, and you just want
to show everyone, or you give someone else a gift and you're
excited because they like it so much. God did exactly that! He
sent his son Jesus and said, *Come and look! this
is the gift I am
giving to
you, and all
mankind.*

How
amazing
is that? It
is incredibly
special when we
receive a gift from
someone we love,
but how about when
we receive a gift
from God: the
creator of the
universe?

God sent
His son, Jesus,
as a gift for you, and as
a gift for me, so make
sure this Christmas
you remember
to thank God for
the gift He gave
you, which is Jesus
Christ, His one and
only son. 📖



Good King Wenceslas

Adapted from a Talk given at Terrigal Christian israelite Church by Paul RICARDO.

Good King Wenceslas looked out
On the feast of Stephen
When the snow lay round about
Deep and crisp and even
Brightly shone the moon that night
Though the frost was cruel
When a poor man came in sight
Gath'ring winter fuel

"Hither, page, and stand by me
If thou know'st it, telling
Yonder peasant, who is he?
Where and what his dwelling?"
"Sire, he lives a good league hence
Underneath the mountain
Right against the forest fence
By Saint Agnes' fountain."

"Bring me flesh and bring me wine
Bring me pine logs hither
Thou and I will see him dine
When we bear them thither."
Page and monarch forth they went
Forth they went together
Through the rude wind's wild lament
And the bitter weather

"Sire, the night is darker now
And the wind blows stronger
Fails my heart, I know not how,
I can go no longer."
"Mark my footsteps, my good page
Tread thou in them boldly
Thou shalt find the winter's rage
Freeze thy blood less coldly."

In his master's steps he trod
Where the snow lay dinted
Heat was in the very sod
Which the Saint had printed
Therefore, Christian men, be sure
Wealth or rank possessing
Ye who now will bless the poor
Shall yourselves find blessing.

We all know the Christmas carol, but how many of us know the history of the carol? It is based, like a lot of other carols, on an actual real person and events associated with this person's life.

The Christmas carol, Good King Wenceslas, was written in 1853 by John Mason Neale. Neale wrote about the Good King looking out of his window on St. Stephen's Day, which is the day after Christmas, and observing a poor man gathering wood for a winter fire - it is a Boxing Day Carol.

King Wenceslas was actually based on the life of St. Wenceslaus I, the Duke of Bohemia (907-935), and known in Czech as Vaclav. He was a very good and honest man, with strong principles. This side of his character is portrayed in the carol by the Wenceslas braving a fierce storm so that he could take food, wine and wood to the poor man he had observed from his window.

Wenceslas was a strong Christian who had been raised in a strong Christian family. His grandmother was a Christian woman who is known today as St. Ludmila. Ludmila was married to the first Christian duke of Bohemia - the couple converted to Christianity c871AD. St. Ludmila is the patroness and patron saint of Bohemia. Unfortunately, Wenceslas' mother, Drahomira, did not share her son's Christian beliefs, and was jealous of Ludmila and Wenceslas' close relationship. Drahomira joined forces with an anti-Christian group that murdered St. Ludmilla, and then gained control of Bohemia. This happened in 920AD.

In 922AD, Drahomira was deposed and Good King Wenceslas, as history remembers him, became the Duke of Bohemia. In 929 AD his wicked younger brother, Boleslave, murdered him.

Wenceslas was Bohemia's most famous martyr and also Bohemia's patron saint. Bohemian coins bore the image of Wenceslas and the Crown of Wenceslas became the symbol of Czech independence.

Cosmas of Prague, writing in the year 1119, states, *"But his deeds I think you know better than I could tell you; for, as is read in his Passion, no one doubts that, rising every night from his noble bed, with bare feet and only one chamberlain, he went around to God's churches and gave alms generously to widows, orphans, those in prison and afflicted by every difficulty, so much so that he was considered, not a prince, but the father of all the wretched."*

What an example to Christians today of selfless giving, always putting those less fortunate than yourself above yourself and neighbourliness. He that gives, receives, as we read in Proverbs 19:17, *"He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again."*

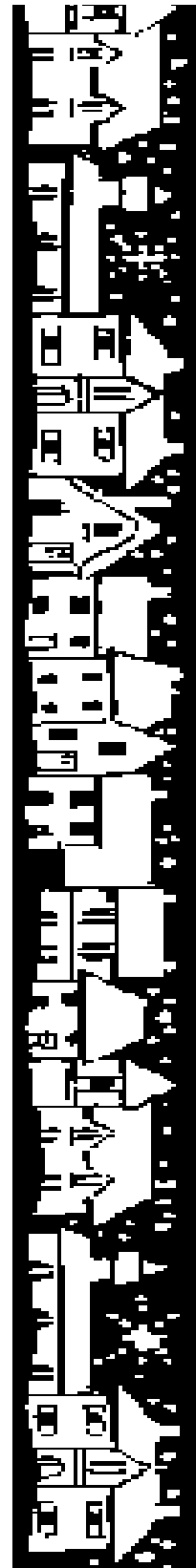
The Christmas carol is a lesson to the singer/hearer in endurance, that when you feel you can go no further, God will provide and give you the strength you need to carry on. When the page was complaining that he could go no further, 'I can go no longer,' what did Wenceslas suggest? He told the page to follow in his footsteps, thereby protecting the page from the wind and cold a little, by having Wenceslas in front of him. Miraculously, though, the carol tells us that when the page stepped in his master's footprints, 'heat was in the very sod.'

This was a highly unusual situation. Being the ruler of his country, Wenceslas could have easily just told his page to collect up the items he wanted delivered, and ordered his page to deliver him. A normal ruler would not undertake that type of journey if he could get a servant to do it for him. So not only does Wenceslas take responsibility for his decision to help this poor man, but he also leads the way. He could have got his page to lead the way, breaking the wind's impact on him, but no, Wenceslas took the brunt of the storm (took the responsibility for his decision) and led the way.

There is much worth imitating in this Christmas carol. When we feel the going is too hard, or we are left out in the cold, Wenceslas is an example of Jesus. Jesus is always with us, He will never leave us out in the cold. As Christians we must walk in the Master's (Jesus') footsteps. Remember Jesus' words in Luke 9:23, *"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."*

Every year we are reminded of Good King Wenceslas with the singing of this carol, and we are encouraged to give of ourselves to others, especially the poor, the orphaned, and the widowed. Throughout the Old and New Testaments, God has instructed us to be mindful of the fatherless, the husbandless, and the penniless, as well as Jesus' reminder to us that, *"the poor always ye have with you,"* John 12:8.

This is an eternal carol for perpetual ages because mankind will always have forms of hardship and suffering until Jesus Christ returns, but it is our job as Christians to help and give to those who need it, and God will reward our efforts. 📖



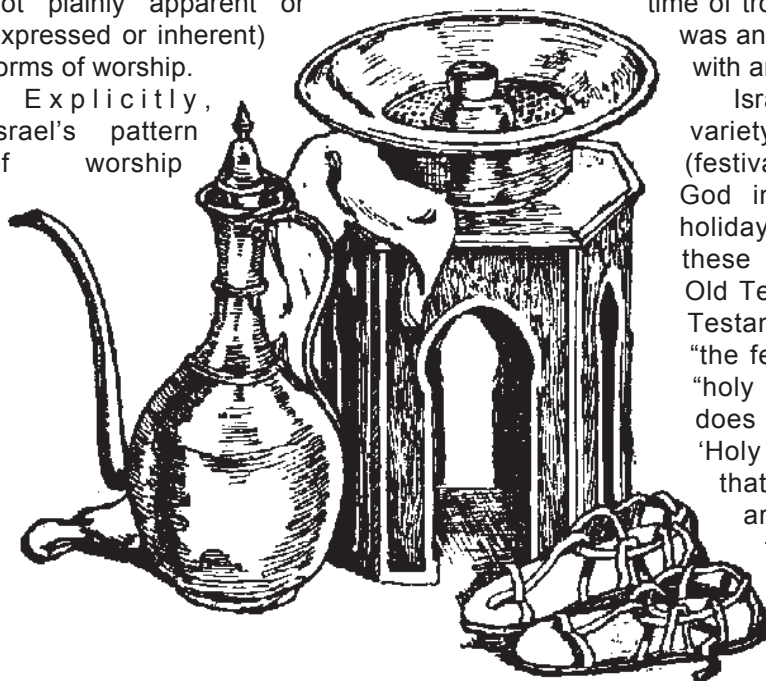
Debug Your Bible: Feasts & Festivals of Israel

by Lynne GRAY

Why were feasts so important for Israel to keep? Why did God ordain in the Law that certain feasts and festivals were to be held for particular reasons and specific times in the year? How important are the feasts/festivals as part of Israel's form of worship? This article will look at the history of the feasts and festivals and the fulfilment of these feasts and festivals today and why we still celebrate those that we still do today.

The Israelites had two defining forms of worship in which they participated: the celebration of festivals and the offering of sacrifices. Both these forms of worship involved certain rituals that incorporated both explicit (meaning that it is clearly stated and leaving nothing implied; distinctly expressed; definite) and implicit (meaning that it is suggested or to be understood though not plainly expressed or implied; a form that is naturally involved though not plainly apparent or expressed or inherent) forms of worship.

Explicitly, Israel's pattern of worship



consisted in regular public assembly and at these assemblies Israel would perform certain acts that were communal, public, and material. This outward display of devotion to God highlighted the exclusivity of the relationship between God and Israel – God had chosen Israel to be His special people, Israel did not choose to follow God – God was the Chief Engineer of this relationship.

Implicitly, the festivals related to God - acknowledging Him as the creator of everything, acknowledging His responsibility for all blessings as well as acknowledging God as the Redeemer of Israel with the festivals serving as a historical reminder of this deliverance. The festivals showed Israel's devotion to the One God (God) as well as displayed Israel's assuredness that God was present in their lives, in relationship with them constantly – not a deity to be invoked in time of trouble or distress - God was an ever-abiding presence with and within Israel.

Israel celebrated a variety of feast times (festivals) – interestingly God instituted seven feast holidays (festivals) and these are mentioned in the Old Testament and the New Testament – they are called “the feasts of the Lord” and “holy convocations.” What does this term mean? ‘Holy convocations’ means that these seven feasts are intended ‘holy times’ for communion between God and man. These are days designated for God, not

holidays designated by man. All seven holidays are listed in chronological sequence in Leviticus chapter 23. The feast days are days given to Israel as a nation because Israel is God's covenant people.

Because the Israelites were an agricultural-based nation their feasts were based around the spring and autumn harvest seasons. The feasts were designed to acknowledge and celebrate the blessings that God had given them. The feasts are timed using a luni-solar calendar – 354 day cycle, as opposed to the solar calendar that is used by the western world (known as the Gregorian calendar) that has a 365 day cycle and 366 days in a leap year. The difference between the 2 calendars is approximately 11 days. For the Jewish calendar to stay in alignment with the solar calendar, Judaism has a 19 year metonic cycle of 235 lunar months with a intercalary lunar month added every 2 or 3 years for a total of 7 times every 19 years. If this adjustment was not made then after a few years winter would occur in summer and the harvest would not be ready for the festival.

Feasts and festivals were an important means by which members of Israel established fellowship with each other. Feasts and festivals highlight Israel's communion with God, with God being the focus of these feasts. The feasts and festivals serve as a reminder of who was in control of the life of Israel as a nation as well as the members of Israel as individuals.

Four out of the seven feasts occur in the northern hemisphere spring, with the final three feasts occurring in the Autumn. It could be said that the first four feasts relate to Jesus Christ's coming for the first time, and the latter three feasts relate to Jesus Christ's return or second coming (this will be dealt with in another article).

Feast of Passover – known as the first feast to the Lord (Leviticus 23:5) – it is the first feast held every year and the feasts that come after Passover all build

upon it. Passover occurs in the northern hemisphere spring on the 14th day of Nisan (March/April) and Passover also commences the start of the religious year for Israel. Although Passover is celebrated every year, there was only one Passover and that occurred approximately 3,500 years ago in Egypt (Exodus 12:12-14), but God commanded that since the time of the Passover this feast was to be kept (Exodus chapter 12). The Passover remembers Israel's redemption and God's hand in that redemption.

Utterance was an important part of the feast and sacrificial system of the Israelites. Utterance as part of the way in which Israel worshipped, occurred in two ways:

- God speaking to Israel, and
- Israel speaking to God.

This was a special and unique relationship that involved dialogue and involvement – it was personal. God speaks to Israel through utterance with the giving of the Commandments and the conditions of the covenant. The Law covers every sphere of life under the rule of God – for Israel God is a constant, ever-abiding presence, and hourly, by their very lifestyle (the following of the Law), they are reminded of this relationship with their Creator. Through public utterance, ie., regular assemblies of the people to hear the Law, God's presence and activity within Israel is constantly reaffirmed. The festival of Passover is a good example of utterance as a form of worship on the part of the Israelites, for this festival also had the instruction that the children must be educated with regards the importance and reason for the festival: *"This is done because of that which the Lord did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt,"* Exodus 13:8. The elder of the family would recite the story of God's deliverance of Israel from the Egyptians as a reminder of God's goodness, God's presence, God's love of Israel, God's guidance and God's faithfulness. It was important for the following generations to remember, and it was a means of reaffirmation of the special relationship of Israel to God and

God to Israel.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:5-14) – begins the day after Passover on the 15th of Nisan (a Sunday) and lasted for seven days. Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread are so closely related that the Jewish people today observe them as one holiday. Traditional Jewish women would sprinkle breadcrumbs (leaven/yeast) in hard to get at places in every room in their house. They would then get a broom and dustpan and meticulously sweep every corner to gather up the crumbs she had just spread. These crumbs would be swept up and then burnt. The leaven/yeast symbolizes error or evil. Fermentation needs yeast to accomplish its job (Matthew 16:6,11; Mark 8:15; 1st Corinthians 5:6). It was symbolic of removing the sin from the household. Jesus died for the sins of all mankind and swept the crumbs from all believers hearts so this feast has been fulfilled.

The Feast of Firstfruits – This is the third feast in the Jewish calendar and occurs on the 2nd day of the Feast of Unleavened

Bread – 16th of Nisan. This is the time that the barley harvest is traditionally now ripe and the first sheaf or firstfruits of the harvest is cut following a precise formula and ceremony and is given to God.

The Feast of Weeks (Leviticus 23:15-22) – the fourth feast and traditionally known as *Shavuot* it is called the Feast of Weeks because God told the children of Jacob to count seven weeks from Firstfruits (Leviticus 23:15; Deuteronomy 16:9) and on the day after this observe the 4th feast (Leviticus 23:16). This feast was to occur precisely 50 days after Firstfruits (a Sunday), and it is also referred to as Pentecost (Acts 2:1) which is Greek for 'fiftieth'. For this feast the Israelites were to bring not only the firstfruits from the wheat harvest, but also two loaves of bread (baked with fine flour and leaven). The two loaves were taken to the Temple but in Christian times the two loaves are seen as representing Jew and Gentile – the universality of the Christian message.

The Feast of Trumpets – the first of the fall feasts and is known as *Rosh Hashanah*

Jewish Festival Calendar				
Month	Equivalent	Length	Date	Holiday
1. Nisan	Mar/Apr	30 days	Nisan 14 Nisan 15-21 Nisan 16	Passover Unleavened Bread Firstfruits
2. Iyar	Apr/May	29 days		
3. Sivan	May/June	30 days	Sivan 6	Shavuot
4. Tammuz	June/July	29 days		
5. Av	July/Aug	30 days	Av 9	Tisha B'Av (minor)
6. Elul	Aug/Sept	29 days		
7. Tishri	Sept/Oct	30 days	Tishri 1 Tishri 10 Tishri 15-21	Rosh Hashanah Yom Kippur Sukkot
8. Heshvan	Oct/Nov	29/30 days		
9. Kislev	Nov/Dec	29/30 days	Kislev 25 - Tevet 2/3	
10. Tevet	Dec/Jan	29 days		
11. Shevat	Jan/Feb	30 days		
12. Adar	Feb/Mar	29 days 30 in leap year	Adar 14	Purim (minor)

(literally meaning 'Head of the Year') by the Jewish people and is observed as the commencement of the Jewish *civil* year on the 1st day of Tishri (this started in the 2nd century AD), as opposed to the *religious* year mentioned above. In Judaism this feast is regarded as one of the 'high holy days'. Israel's form of religious worship utilized two types of trumpets – one was long and flared and made of silver; the other, known as the *Shofar*, was a ram's horn – the ram's horn was used in the Feast of Trumpets. Why did Israel blow the ram's horn? The ram's horn was blown to gather Israel into God's presence (Exodus 19:13,17,19; Numbers 10:2). The ram's horn was also blown when Israel was to go to war (Numbers 10:9; Judges 7; Jeremiah 4:19-21; Joshua 6:20; Judges 7:18; Nehemiah 4:18). Jewish tradition believes that three books are opened in heaven at the time of the Feast of Trumpets:

- The Book of Life for the righteous;
- The Book of Life for the unrighteous; and
- The Book of Life for those in between.

Judaism believes that it is during the time of the Feast of Trumpets that mankind is judged and placed into one of these three Books of Life – if a man is deemed righteous he is written in the first book, if deemed unrighteous he is written in the second book and will not survive the year, and if deemed as in between, his judgment is delayed until the Day of Atonement to give him an opportunity to repent before the Book of Life is closed.

The Day of Atonement also known as ***Yom Kippur*** (Leviticus 23:23-32) – occurs 9 days after Trumpets on the 10th of Tishri. The 9 day period between Trumpets and the Day of Atonement is known in Judaism as 'the days of awe.' The Day of Atonement is a means of providing reconciliation to God for a community that found itself distanced from God and did not have the resources of its own to reconcile the situation.

The Feast of Tabernacles (also known as ***Sukkot*** or the Feast of Booths

- Leviticus 23:33-43) – the 7th and final feast in the Israelite calendar. The Feast of Tabernacles occurs on the 15th of Tishri and is a seven day feast. Orthodox Jews erect little 'huts' or 'booths' made from bulrushes as a reminder of the temporary housing they had to use during the wanderings through the desert during the Exodus. Samples of the fall crop are hung about the booths as a reminder of God's faithfulness and provision. This feast is associated with the provision of water for the success of the crops. Each day of the feast, the high priest, with a procession following him, would descend from the Temple Mount down to the Pool of Siloam where a pitcher was filled with water. The High Priest would then return via a different route back to the Temple Mount. Once back at the Temple Mount the High Priest would pour the water onto the altar. Apparently in the land of Israel there is no rain for almost 7 months so if God does not provide the early rains in October and November there will be famine because there will be no spring crop.

For three of the seven feasts (Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles) it was required of all males of Israel to travel to the Temple in Jerusalem – attendance was compulsory (Exodus 23:14-19; Deuteronomy 16:16-17).

Two other days are considered holy days by the Israelites: the Sabbath and the Year of Jubilee.

The Sabbath – The injunction for the keeping of the Sabbath as mandatory on the nation of Israel was given in the Ten Commandments (Decalogue) in Exodus 20:8-10, "*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.*" The Sabbath was another form of worship that had clear instructions given to Israel with regards the correct way of keeping the Sabbath. The

Sabbath served as a weekly reminder of who Israel was and the weekly readings of the Law would have reminded Israel of their covenant with God and given the Israelites cohesiveness in their communal gathering because they were all gathered and in one accord. The Sabbath may also be referred to as a feast day as traditionally, in the western world, Sunday midday meal is usually used as a time for family gatherings and therefore could be seen as a feast on the Sabbath to the Lord, especially if God is the focus of the meal.

Year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25:8-55)
 - the Year of Jubilee protected the family unit and property thereby preserving the unity of Israel.

The feasts/festivals that God had ordained for Israel to keep are God's appointed times for Him to meet with man for spiritual and holy purposes. The feasts/festivals all had one thing in common – the worshipper was expected to present himself before God.

The most important aspect of these seven feasts in this age, though, is that they depict the entire redemptive career of Jesus Christ (the Messiah) – from Passover (the crucifixion of Jesus) to the climax feast of Tabernacles (the establishment of God's kingdom with the second coming of the Messiah) the feasts could be seen to give us the sequence and spiritual significance of Jesus Christ's redemptive activity for mankind:

- Passover – **Redemption** – the Messiah, the Passover lamb has been slain for us.
- Unleavened Bread – **Sanctification** – Jesus was set apart and his body saw not corruption.
- Feast of Firstfruits – **Preservation** – death could not hold Jesus.
- Feast of Weeks – **Origination** – the descent of the Holy Ghost. The breakdown of the middle wall between Jews and Gentiles.

Perhaps this is why John Wroe suggested that Israel were to keep Pentecost, Christmas

and Easter as feast times, which would align perfectly with the Biblical injunction that 3 times a year Israel was to come before the Lord (Deuteronomy 16:16,17). It has been shown that historically feasts/festivals were a form of worship for Israel to remember and celebrate God's bountiful gifts and protective guidance of Israel. **By keeping the feasts the Israelite constantly has in focus all aspects of the Godhead (Trinity), and has a realisation in their daily lives of the influence of the different aspects of the Godhead in their spiritual lives.** 📖

The Book of Jubilees

“He gave us a great sign, the Sabbath day, and he told us - all of the angels of the presence and all of the angels of sanctification, these two great kinds - that we might keep the Sabbath with Him in heaven and on earth... That day is more holy and more blessed than any day of the jubilee of jubilees. On this day we kept the Sabbath in heaven before it was made known to any human being to keep the Sabbath thereon upon the earth.

“The Creator of all blessed it, but He did not sanctify any people or nations to keep the Sabbath thereon with the sole exception of Israel... And the Creator of all, who created this day for a blessing and sanctification and glory, blessed it more than all days...

“It is ordained and written in the heavenly tablets that they should observe the feast of Weeks... once a year, in order to renew the covenant in all respects, year by year. And all of this feast was celebrated in heaven from the day of creation until the days of Noah, twenty six jubilees and five weeks of years...

“And you [Moses], command the children of Israel so that they shall guard the years in this number, 364 days, and it will be a complete year,” Book of Jubilees, chapters 2 and 6. 📖

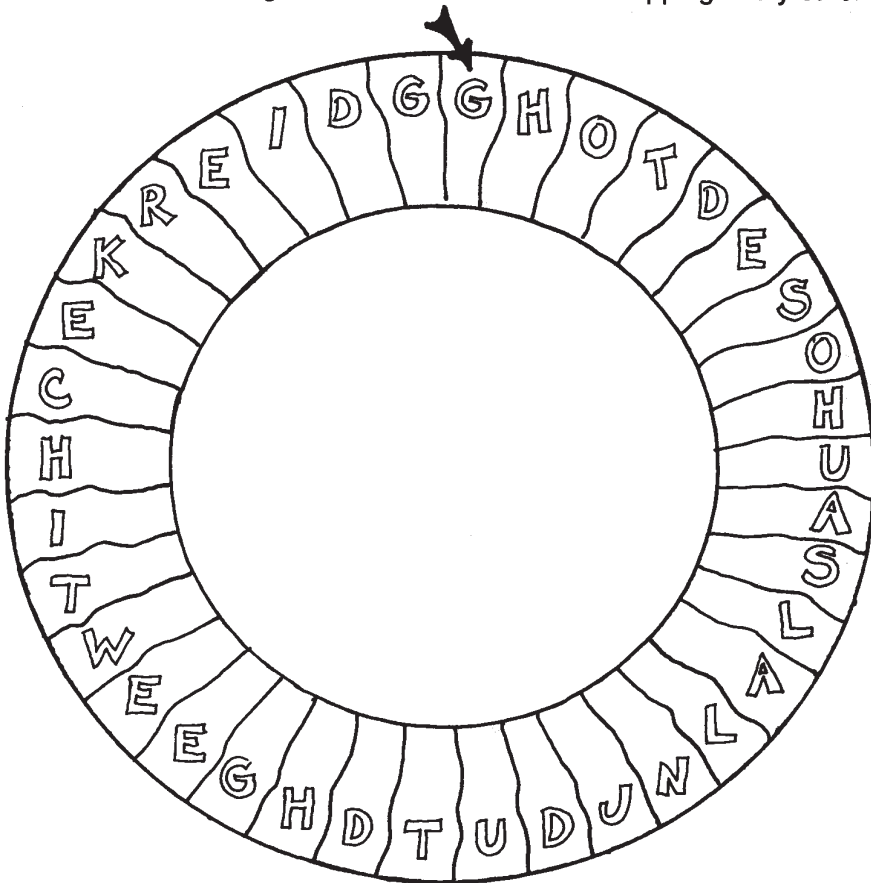
Puzzle Page

Judge not, that ye be not judged. Matthew 7:1

God doesn't want us to look down on others as if we don't do anything wrong.

Do the puzzle below to find out whose Job it is to Judge.

Begin with the "G" and go around the circle 2 times skipping every other letter.



Eccl. 3:17

Expand Your Bible: Worship

by Audrey HARRISON

It would seem that 'to worship' is an integral part of human nature. So what is worship? The dictionary defines it firstly as 'a great love, honour and respect' and secondly as 'the showing of deep honour and respect for God in a ceremony or prayer.'

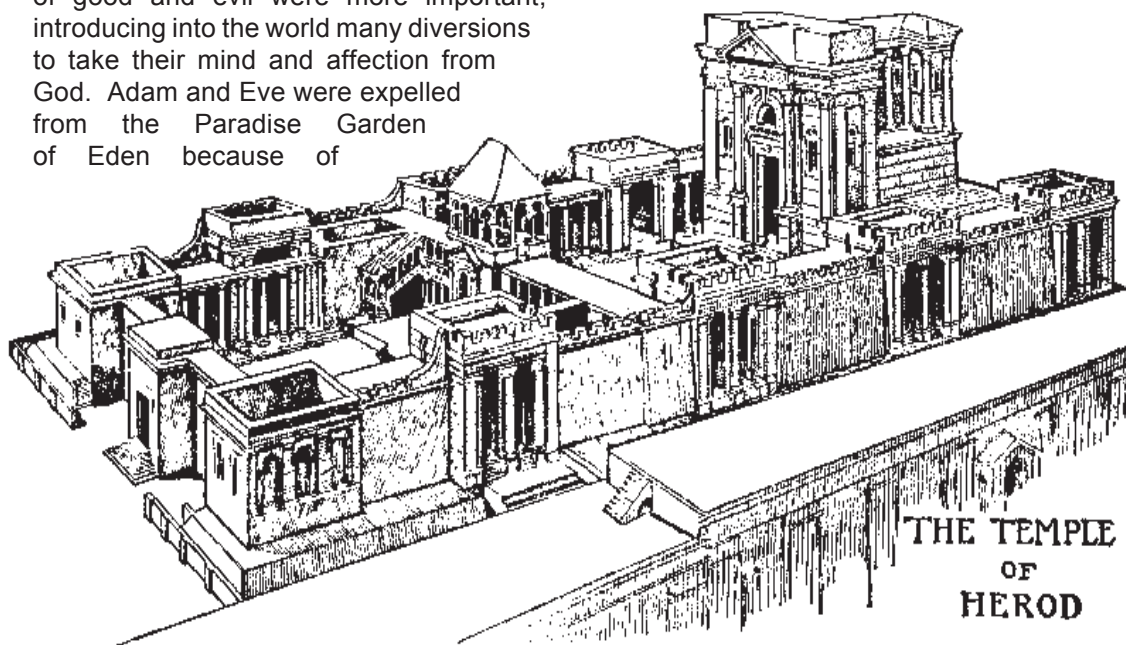
Earlier civilizations had many gods or objects of worship ... in fact almost every facet of life had its own particular god. For instance there was a god of the sea, a god of the moon, a god of the sun, a god of nature, etc., and each had its own rules and requirements for worship. It is interesting to note that in many cultures they also had an unknown god just in case they had forgotten one.

When mankind was first created they worshipped God Almighty, their Creator. They spoke with Him and were obedient to His instructions. This continued until Satan, the Devil, gained more 'hold' over them persuading them to think that other things such as gaining the worldly knowledge of good and evil were more important, introducing into the world many diversions to take their mind and affection from God. Adam and Eve were expelled from the Paradise Garden of Eden because of

disobedience and their worship of God became contaminated with the result that mankind became so wicked that a Flood was sent to destroy this wickedness, and only Noah and his family were saved from destruction. After the Flood man again became proud and wandered far from God's teachings.

God's plan surfaced again with the calling of Abram (later renamed Abraham), and the subsequent choosing by God of his descendants to become the people to carry on over the years the worship of God and the way in which He wanted people to live.

The Israelites were monotheistic, worshipping one God, Yahweh, and Him alone. Surrounding nations could not understand that the God of Israel knew no country borders and could be everywhere. They did not understand that God dwells in the hearts and minds of His followers and so is with them wherever they may be. Naaman, the Syrian general who was



THE TEMPLE
OF
HEROD

healed of his leprosy by God through Elisha the prophet, showed this concept as when he was returning to his country he wanted to take with him some of the soil from Israel so that he could worship Israel's God.

Today there is a great variety of avenues in which people direct their worship. Some worship money by accumulating great wealth and some worship possessions such as a car, land a house, etc. It is not wrong to like and appreciate fine things as long as God is in first place.

The second definition of worship being an act showing deep respect and honour for God in a ceremony or prayer is the traditionally accepted one.

We often think of worship as being solemn and sombre, but is this as it should always be? Worship should be happy and thankful, as well as having its solemn moments.

Worship is, and should be, a daily happening but there are certain times when it is more obvious - times such as Christmas and Easter come readily to mind.

In biblical times the people were told they were obliged to attend certain celebrations or 'feasts' and most of these combined both solemnity and merriment and fun.

It is quite interesting to note on how many occasions of celebration or worship landmark happenings took place.

The first miracle Jesus performed was at a wedding - a time of solemn commitment and happy celebration - when He turned water into wine. It was the Harvest Festival at the end of the harvest that Ruth first made her approach to Boaz. From this encounter came the lovely romance and story of Ruth and Boaz - from them comes the line from King David to Jesus.

When Jesus was twelve, it was at the attendance at a Passover celebration that His knowledge of, and relationship with, God first became really apparent and his parents began to realize even more that their son was no ordinary boy.

There are many other cases. Where did Samson meet Delilah? When did he pull down the pillars of the building in which the Philistines were celebrating

(Judges 16:4; 16:29)?

As we approach Christmas let us make our worship a true joy, a time of fellowship, fun and goodwill to our fellow man. Let us also make it a time of real thanksgiving to God for His gift to us of allowing His Son to come to earth to grow up as a human to experience all our weaknesses, and to let us thank Jesus Christ for accepting and fulfilling this challenge. 📖

New Year's Wishes

What shall I wish thee?
Treasures of earth?
Songs in the springtime,
Pleasures and mirth?
Flowers on thy pathway,
Skies ever clear?
Would this insure thee
A Happy New Year?

What shall I wish thee?
What can be found
Bringing thee sunshine
All the year 'round?
Where is the treasure,
Lasting and dear,
That shall ensure thee
A Happy New Year?

Faith that increaseth
Walking in light;
Hope that aboundeth,
Happy and bright;
Love that is perfect,
Casting out fear;
These shall ensure thee
A Happy New Year.

Peace in the Saviour,
Rest at His feet,
Smile of His countenance
Radiant and sweet,
Joy in His presence!
Christ ever near!
This will ensure thee
A Happy New Year!

Frances Ridley Havergal

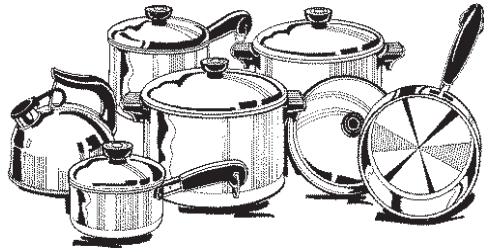
Vegetarian Recipes

Spinach & Mushroom Salad

1 small French bread stick
¼ cup olive tapenade
350g baby spinach leaves, washed
250g mushrooms, sliced

DRESSING:

½ cup olive oil
½ cup white wine vinegar
2 tspns sesame oil
1 tblspns seeded mustard
1 tblspn honey
salt and pepper, to taste



Preheat oven to 180degC. Cut French bread stick in half lengthwise and spread each half with the tapenade, then cut into 1cm slices. Put on a tray and bake for 15 minutes. Cool and store in an airtight container until ready to dress salad.

Place spinach and mushrooms in a large serving bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate until ready to serve.

DRESSING: Place all ingredients in a screw top jar and shake until mixture becomes creamy. Refrigerate until needed. To serve, toss spinach and mushrooms with prepared dressing and serve with toasted French bread slices.

Serves 8.

Tomato and Onion Crumble

7 large tomatoes, sliced or 810g can drained tomatoes, sliced
4 small white onions, sliced thinly
Fresh basil leaves, finely chopped
A little sugar and salt (optional)
Freshly ground pepper
1 cup soft wholemeal breadcrumbs
1 cup shredded tasty cheese

Preheat oven to 190degC. Layer the tomato and onion slices in a shallow, ovenproof dish, sprinkling between the layers with basil, sugar, salt and pepper, to taste. Cover.

Bake for about 15 minutes. Remove cover. Increase the oven to 220degC. Combine breadcrumbs and cheese and sprinkle over the top. Continue baking until the top is melted and golden. Serve hot.

Serves 6.