

PESACH

The word “holiday” is derived from the word “holyday”. *Webster* explains it as: “A day set apart for commemorating some important event in history; a festival intended to celebrate some event deemed auspicious to the welfare of a nation; particularly an anniversary festival, devoted to religious solemnities; as christmas holydays.” We were brought up and got our identity against the backdrop of a society controlled by Satan (1 Joh 5:19). Because of that we fell pray to give substance and legitimacy to that which the Bible in Deut 32:17 calls “not-God” (*Darbey*). Our so-called “holydays” are rooted in demonic idol-worship, because “we were once Gentiles in the flesh, living utterly apart from Christ as aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world” (Eph 2:11-12).

Through rebirth, the “circumcision made without hands” (Col 2:11), we are no longer alienated from the commonwealth of Israel (Eph 2:12). Therefore, according to Rom 9:4, “we are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises (including the feasts).” For, as it is set out in Rom 9:6, “they are not all Israel who are of Israel”. The *Peterson Translation* depicts this clearly: “not all Israelites of the flesh were Israelites of the spirit”. Reborn Christians are therefore Israelites of the spirit.

The feast of Pesach, the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Feast of the First Fruits were celebrated simultaneously to commemorate the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt (Ex 11-12). It started on the 14th day of the first Hebrew month and lasted for a week. This first of all the feasts was primarily instituted as a memorial of God’s rescue operation to free the Israelites from their bondage and aimed to set them on their way to the Promised Land. Thus God made this ordinance: “Observe the month of Abib, and keep the Passover to the Lord your God, for in the month of Abib the Lord your God brought you out of Egypt by night.” (Deut 16:1).

The activities during the month of Abib are primarily centered around the celebration of Passover as commemoration of the time the people of God were “exempted from judgement”, passed-over by God through the blood of the Passover lamb which had to be put on the doorposts and lentils to redeem them from Egyptian bondage. *This* event is celebrated. Thus, contrary to the Jewish Orthodox tradition regarding the celebration of the feasts, present day celebrations mainly serve as a reminder of the atonement the Messiah came to fulfil. Jesus says in Mat 5:17: “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfil.” The feasts were therefore not nullified, but fulfilled in Christ. The feasts should therefore be regarded as a shadow of reality, since true fulfilment can only be found in a living relationship with Christ: “for on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God” (Heb 7:18-19).

The feasts are merely a shadow, or as Thayer puts it, “shade caused by the interception of light; an image cast by an object and representing the form of that object”. For this reason the moon is often presented as a symbol for the Bride (Song of Solomon 6:10). She has no light in herself; she merely reflects the light of the Sun of Righteousness (Mal 4:2), Christ, the everlasting Light. She is the moon moving in brightness around the sun (Job 31:26). As the sun casts its shadows of light on the moon, the Bride becomes aware of the “ordinances of the moon” (Jer 31:5; Ps 81:3). The Jewish Lunar Calendar forms the basis of Christ’s consummative dance IN us. As the light increases in the waxing moon, the month and the year, we should take courage to also progressively increase our joy in Him. “He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing ... to rejoice in his light.” (Joh 5:35).

The feasts become perfected in Christ; therefore no legalistic approach could add anything to or enhance our intimate relationship with God. The feasts afford us an opportunity to recall how God's Plan for the redemption of mankind unfolded in real terms, through what happened with the Israelites as well as WITH US, WITH YOU, AND ME, when HE delivered us from the fiery furnace of the worldly system that oppressed us so severely.

The symbolism connected to the feast of Pesach and the Feast of the Unleavened Bread is conspicuous. Christ our paschal lamb, without sin (=yeast), blood on the doorposts (Christ the door - Joh 10) makes our redemption attainable - "Therefore purge out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (1Cor 5:7-8).

The Feast of the First Fruits points to Christ as the first-fruits who has been resurrected from the dead. "But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep." (1Cor 15:20). Christ who lives in us as the First-born to Life, enables us to be restored to life again in the spirit like it has happened with Him.

One of the most beautiful aspects of Pesach is concealed in one of the meanings of the word itself. It has always bothered me that the meaning of Pesach is only woven around the role the Angel of Death played at "Passover" when he had to pass over the doors and lintels stroked with the blood of the passover lamb. I, for one, wouldn't want to celebrate a feast that elevates the actions of the Angel of Death - after all, it stays the Angel of Death that passes over! "For the Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you." (Ex 12:23). It states literally, "And the LORD will cross to afflict the Egyptians with a plague, and He will see the blood on the door lintel and on the two sides of the door-frame, and the LORD will **PASACH** upon that doorway and He will not allow the Destroyer to come into your homes to afflict a plague."

God very distinctly **PASACH** over the house, and the Hebrew meaning of this word is also: "to protect, guard or make defense!" (*Marcus*). The direct translation in Isa 31:5 illustrates this beautifully: "Like hovering birds overhead, the LORD Almighty will **SHIELD** Jerusalem; He will **DEFEND** and deliver it, He will **PASACH** it and will cause it to escape." Pesach in this context introduces a total new meaning to the table about the name of God *El Shaddai*: He who in his fullness protects us **COMPLETELY**. Celebrate therefore in this festive season God's unfolding plan for your salvation, for his people and that his provision and protection hover over you!