IN THIS ISSUE:
THE FALL FEASTS OF THE LORD
THE SIGNS OF THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH
part II
“Then have the trumpet sounded everywhere on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement sound the trumpet throughout your land. Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each of you is to return to your family property and to your own clan.”
(Lev. 25:9-10)

In Hebrew the fiftieth year is called **Yovel**, a celebration year, jubilee. It is the year of the blowing of the ram´s horn. Thus Yovel got its name from the shofar announcing the beginning of the year. The sound of the Yovel declares the beginning of a new era, the era of God´s favour towards Israel. In Hebrew the word yovel can be read in two ways. Either “yovel”, which means a ram or a ram’s horn like a shofar, or in passive voice “yuval”, is led or was led, like in Isaiah 53: “he was led like a lamb to the slaughter... for the transgression of my people he was punished.”

Like a lamb which has a desire to follow its shepherd humbly, to be led, “yuval”.
The three names of the shofar are like a road signs on our salvation path: **Keren**, which is the name including the personal calling, rose up in smoke with the sacrificed ram instead of Isaac (Gen. 22:13).

On Mount Sinai the Israelites heard the sound of that horn, **Shofar**, for the first time when it called the people to make the change, a turn a round, teshuva.
The nation learned the sound of the shofar when The Lord himself blew the horn (Ex. 19:16).

From that point on the Israelites were commanded to blow themselves on the shofar (Lev. 25:9), until The Sovereign Lord himself blows it, this time the shofar called **Yovel** (Zech. 9:14).

Then He will announce freedom, liberation, a jubilee to all nations, to all of those who will hear His voice.

Yeshua the Messiah, Jesus Christ, started his ministry in the synagogue declaring with the words of Isaiah 61:1-2 proclaiming good news to the poor, freedom for the captives, release from darkness for the prisoners and proclaiming the year of the Lord’s favor.

Proclaiming the jubilee, which is The Messiah himself.

In Him is the heritage restored, the one we lost in the garden of Eden. In Him is the essence of Yovel.

(http://torah-art.net)

Markus Nurmesniemi

In this edition:
Editorial: Sorry Frank! ....................................................................................................................... p. 2
Keijo Lindeman: Feasts of Trumpets and the Lord´s Day ............................................................. p. 3-5
Dr Clifford Denton: Feasts of the Lord - Called into His Presence .............................................. p. 6-7
Dr Karl Coke: Bible Study with Dr Coke - The Feast of Tabernacles ........................................... p. 8
Dr John Garr: All the Torah Prophesied - How did it do it? .......................................................... p. 9-10
Prophetic Perspectives: The Signs of the Coming of the Messiah- part II ............................... p. 11-18

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Editorial

Sorry Frank!

Shalom u’vracha riends!

As this summer draws near to its end we are also coming closer to the end of the yearly cycle of the Hebrew calendar.

At sundown on 9th of September begins Rosh HaShanah (Hebr. ראש השנה, “The Head of the Year”). It’s a Jewish new year, which begins the ten day season “the Days of Awe”, which ends on Yom Kippur, “Day of the Atonement”, the holiest day of the year in Judaism. The biblical new year, however, begins in spring time at the beginning of the month of Nisan (Leviticus 23:23-25), but the both seasons have their place in the cycle.

In the Torah of the Bible the Rosh HaShanah is known as Yom Teruah, “Day of Shouting”. From that day starts the season of the Fall Feasts of the Lord. The season calls us for self-examination, repentance and rejection of our sins. Ultimately the Fall Feasts reaches the climax in great feast of joy, Sukkot, “The Feasts of Tabernacles”. That feast will also be a great feast of joy and celebration of our Lord in the future Kingdom of God to come.

The feasts are a great reminder for us of the yearly cycle, which is to be walked through in relationship with our Lord. The feasts are bind to Israel’s harvest and agricultural time table, but above all they have their higher meaning as well. Thanks to the redeeming work of Yeshua the Messiah we can do repenting work and spiritual growing in our every day life, but the Feasts, found all over in the Scriptures, offers us enourmos amount of information about the schedule of God’s works and the coming of the Kingdom and its nature.

In Hebrew the feasts are called moadim, “The Appointed times”. Kind of like the meetings which we all make with our employers and bosses. So, you might want keep up to these appointments, is it not? Also, the feasts are a great way of celebrating the final and complete victory of our Lord. At the same time they are lovely way to unify The Bride and to strengthen its unity. The Feasts of the Lord are like the glue which connects the called ones in one heard.

In this issue we take a peak at the Fall Feasts of the Lord. I hope that we can provide you some guidance for independent or group study concerning the meaning and the nature of the feasts. Also another important topic comes to my heart along with this. And that is the the unity and contact among the believers.

Although we all have our rights to our opinions and well meaning agendas, and as much perhaps we would like to see our own community to flourish above the other, we can never neglect the big picture and well being of others.

We are a part of a much larger community. We are a part of the larger picture of all those who believe in One God and in Yeshua (Jesus) as our savior and redeemer. The times they are becoming harder. The unity of the Body of the Messiah is and will be strongly tested. It is vital that we can build up that unity. We can not afford to stay in our little boxes and separate groups arguing with each other. The rest of the world is watching us, either consciously or subconsciously, and they are looking from us that love which is given by the Most High. Our way of being in this world may be a decisive matter to somebody we don’t even know. It may determine a nonbeliever’s direction according to his or her choices and destiny. Let’s try to remember that.

At this point I feel suitable to quote our brother Joseph Shulam’s very wise words from his Jerusalem Prayer list on 12th of July, this year: ”If you look at the Christian denominations today like the tribes of Israel in the ancient world – you might draw the right conclusion of what I am reaching out for. The unity of the Body of the Messiah is something that we all must strive for and fight for and the only way that it can be done is for all of us to change our own narrow minded approach to the faith community and broaden our tents to include and feel responsible for the good and welfare of those who might be out there in left field but still hold the Bible to be the Word of God and Yeshua to be the Messiah and the Holy Spirit to be alive and active in directing the disciples of Yeshua unto all true. There is no value to the restoration of the church if there is no sincere and honest drive for the unity of the body of the Messiah Yeshua. Everything that is restored by different groups pales in front of the need to unite to fight the last battle in the Kingdom of God.

Please work and pray for the unity of the Body of the Messiah. Please widen your view of the Body of the Messiah (Christ) and pray that all will come under the conviction of God’s Word and the Holy Spirit to prepare for the return of the Bride-Groom to take His Bride – the people of God those who have not bowed down to Baal and have not kissed the Ashera.” (J. Shulam)

Finally, I want to apologize from our friend Frank and his team from Galway, Ireland. I would’ve so much liked that our meeting would have succeeded. There would have been so many things to share and talk about, but because of the technical problems and time schedules we never met. Even my communication abilities were totally cut off for whole two weeks. So. I’m so sorry Frank, ‘till next time, if God willing!

With blessings,

Markus Nurmesniemi
editor
Feast of Trumpets
And the Lord’s Day

Written by:
Keijo Lindeman

“For we know in part and we prophesy in part” (1 Cor.13:9)

The Feasts of the Lord - a Shadow of the Things that were to Come

“Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ” (Col.2:16-17).

In his letter to Colossians Apostle Paul writes about the feasts of the Lord that are a shadow of the things that were to come. God’s prophetic plan of salvation in Yeshua the Messiah is revealed symbolically in the Lord’s feasts, from Golgotha and Crucifixion to new heavens and new earth. Spring feasts speak about Messiah’s first coming which He fulfilled about 2000 years ago; autumn feasts speak about His second coming. The Bible tells us about other feasts, too, which date from times after Moses, e.g. Purim in the book of Esther and Hanukkah, a feast from Maccabean times (John 10:22-23).

We discussed the significance of the Lord’s feasts in God’s plan of salvation already in our issue of Yovel August 2017.

In this paper we will delve more deeply into the autumn feast of Trumpets and into its meaning as a shadow of what will happen on the Lord’s Day. First a brief summary and revision of the symbolic significance of spring feasts.

Spring feasts

Pesach, Easter, on Nisan 14th, the day when the Passover lamb without defect was slaughtered (Ex.12:1-4). Symbol of Messiah Yeshua’s Lamb of God’s atoning act on the cross on Nisan 14th (John 1:29, Luke 23).

Chag HaMatzot, seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread (Ex. 12:15-20; Lev. 23:4-8). Symbol of believers’ pure unleavened walk as followers of Messiah Yeshua (1 Cor. 5:6-8).

Firstfruits, Waving of Omer, i.e. sheaf of the first grain of harvest (Lev. 23:9-16; Luke 6:1 in Hebrew NT). Symbol of the resurrection of Messiah Yeshua as the first-born of the dead (1 Cor. 15:20-28).

Shavuot, Feast of Weeks or Pentecost (Lev.23:15-16,21). That is when the Torah (law) was given to the people of Israel and to the whole world at Mount Sinai (Ex. 19-20). Symbol of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit and the writing of Torah (law) on “tablets of flesh” of people’s hearts at Mount Zion at Pentecost, Feast of Weeks (Apt.2:1-8, 20:16; Hebr.8:7-12).

Fall Feasts and Messiah’s Second Coming

Autumn or Fall feasts speak about Yeshua the Messiah’s second coming when He comes to fetch His church and establish the Millennial Kingdom of Peace where the saints reign with the Messiah (Rev.20). Some Bible scholars connect Messiah’s coming and the taking up (resurrection) of the church to the Feast of Trumpets, some to the Feast of Tabernacles. My interpretation is that the Day

A sundown seen from Haifa city hills in Israel in september 2017. Photo by: Markus Nurmesniemi
of Atonement (Yom Kippur) is a foreshadow of Messiah’s coming and taking up of the church, and Feast of Tabernacles is a foreshadow of Messiah’s Millennial Kingdom.

We will discuss the foreshadows of Fall feasts from this perspective and the Feast of Trumpets from the Lord’s Day’s perspective.

Day of Trumpets (Yom Truah) – the Lord’s Day

“The Lord said to Moses, ‘Say to the Israelites: On the first day of the seventh month you are to have a day of rest, a sacred assembly commemorated with trumpet blasts. Do no regular work, but present an offering made to the Lord by fire’ (Lev. 23:23-25).

“On the first day of the seventh month hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. It is a day for you to sound the trumpets” (Num.29:1).

“The great day of the Lord is near – near and coming quickly. Listen! The cry on the day of the Lord will be bitter, the shouting of the warrior there. That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of trouble and ruin, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness, a day of trumpet and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the corner towers. I will bring distress on the people and they will walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord. Their blood will be poured out like dust and their entrails like filth. Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them on the day of the Lord’s wrath. In the fire of his jealousy the whole world will be consumed, for he will make a sudden end of all who live in the earth” (Zephaniah 1:7-18).

The Feast of the Trumpets on the first of the seventh month (Tishri, usually at the end of September) begins the series of fall feasts. The same day is also New Year’s day according to Israeli civil calendar. Shofars made of ram’s horn are blown on that day about which Prophet Zephaniah says that it marks the beginning of the Lord’s Day’s judgments on the earth.

Almost every OT prophet speaks about that time of God’s judgments as He condemns godlessness and the sin of the world. Several NT authors also speak about the Day of the Lord which will take the world by surprise (1 Tess.5:1-9; 2 Tess.2:1-3; 2 Peter 3:10-12).

Most of the Book of Revelation is description of events taking place on the Lord’s Day. It is a consolation to know that the Lord will take care of His own even in difficult times.

From the Day of Trumpets begins a period of ten days which is called in Hebrew yamim noraim, days of awe, which end at Yom Kippur, Day of Atonement (symbol of taking up of the church). During those ten days the Israelites repent, ask God and their neighbour to forgive them their sins and shortcomings in order to have a good judgment and their name in the Book of Life before the Lord at Yom Kippur.

In the Book of Daniel, Daniel and his three friends have a period of ten days of trial when they face the obligation to eat non-kosher Babyloniaion food. The young men remained faithful and only ate kosher food. In the Book of Revelation the church in Smyrna is told that they would suffer persecution for ten days (Rev.2:8-11).

This foreshadows the great tribulation of the End time that will come over all the earth, and that even the church will have to suffer (Dan.11:40-12:3; Matt.24:20-22, 29-30; do not count the duration of tribulation according to the foreshadow). In this time of tribulation the religious system of Babylon the prostitute, run from Rome, tries to force believers to “eat” Babylon’s non-biblical spiritual foods (doctrines), but we have to remain faithful to God’s Word and eat only pure, solid food, "bread of the Word", even in the middle of difficult times (Hebr.5:11-14).

Day of Trumpets – the Ungodly World is judged

“See the day of the Lord is coming – a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger – to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it. The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light. I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins. I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless. I will make man scarcer than pure gold, more rare than the gold of Ophir. Therefore I will make the heavens tremble; and the earth will shake from its place at the wrath of the Lord Almighty, in the day of his burning anger” (Isa.13:9-13).

“When the Bible teaches that marriage is meant to be a covenant between man and woman, many countries embrace gender neutral marriage (Rom.1:18-32). God created man male and female, but in these days, instead of being men and women, we should be neutral humans or some strange beings (Gen. 1:27-28).

The Bible forbids us to take tattoo marks on our body, but now it is trendy to have tattoos (Lev.19:28; 21:5). People steal, practise adultery, tell lies, swear false oaths, break all God’s commandments, and mock God and issues of faith. Those who believe in the truth of God’s word and want to obey the teachings of the Bible and God’s commandments must suffer contempt, hostility, and persecution, even to be prosecuted. God will put an end to all this ungodliness on the Lord’s Day.

Blow the Trumpet in Zion

“Blow the trumpet in Zion: sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming. It is close at hand – a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. Like dawn spreading across the mountains a large and mighty army comes, such as never was of old nor ever will be in ages to come. Before them fire devours, behind them a flame
blazes, before them the land is like the garden of Eden, behind them, a desert waste – nothing escapes them” (Joel 2:1-3).

The book of Prophet Joel concentrates on the terrifying events of the Lord’s Day, the time when people on all the earth will tremble. Joel says that the events will start off in Zion, i.e. Jerusalem, when the trumpet is blown there. Also Jeremiah speaks about judgements starting off in Jerusalem (Jer.25:15-33).

The Lord’s Day will take the World by Surprise

“Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, ‘Peace and safety’, destruction will come on them suddenly, as labour pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Tess.5:1-9).

The Lord’s Day will take the ungodly world, as well as the sleeping believers, by surprise. Paul refers in his prophecy to false sense of peace and security that people are lulled in when God’s judgements start falling on the world. They will come suddenly as labour pains to pregnant women.

These labour pains are earthquakes, famine, anguish, persecution, etc. (Matt.24; Mark 13; Luke 21). Israel, God’s own people, will not escape these labour pains; she will suffer tribulations and enemy attacks ( Isa.26:15-21; Rev 12; Zech.12-14).

Those who are on guard and watch will not be taken by surprise when the Lord’s Day’s events start happening in the world, because they have taken heed of the Lord’s admonition to be ready, to watch and pray as His return is approaching (Mark 13:32).

The Lord’s Day and Revival

“And afterwards I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the Lord has said, among the survivors whom the Lord calls” (Joel 2:28-32).

Apostle Paul quoted these prophetic words of Prophet Joel as he was explaining his audience the pouring out of the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem during the Feast of Shavuot in the times of the early church (Apt.2:1-21). It must be noticed, however, that Joel’s text and the entire message of his book relate closely to the events of the Lord’s day. Joel’s prophecy had its pre-fulfilment during Apostle Paul’s days, but the ultimate fulfillment of the prophecy will take place when the Lord’s day and the coming of Messiah are approaching. The world will experience a brief but strong pouring out of the Spirit and a global awakening.

Every one who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved and taken up with their Lord to the heavenly Mount of Zion, away from the final judgements of God’s wrath (1 Tess.1:10; Hebr.12:18-24). There are other biblical prophecies about the revival of the last days as well, but the subject is too wide to be taken up here.

The Lord’s Day and the Coming of the Lord

“Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction” (2 Thess.2:1-3).

“Immediately after the distress of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other” (Matt.24:29-31).

The great distress of the Lord’s day will culminate in the coming of the Lord and the rapture, i.e. resurrection of believers. That will be the fulfillment of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, shaduw of things to come. Messiah Yeshua will come in the clouds, and believers will be taken up to meet Him in the air. The Messiah will have gathered from the four winds the spirits of those who have died in faith in order for them to receive their resurrection bodies. Believers still living on earth will be transformed in a split second and caught up in their resurrection bodies to meet the Lord in the air together with the resurrected dead (1 Thess.4:13-18; 1 Cor.15).

What a wonderful time of comfort and fulfillment of the hope of resurrection for believers. We are all called to this; we are invited to receive the grace and forgiveness of our Lord and Saviour and to follow Him according to God’s instructions that He has given us in His Word. We can then set our hope fully on the grace to be given us when the Messiah comes (1 Peter 1:13).
The Feasts of the Lord  
Called into His Presence  
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Written by:  
Dr Clifford Denton  

The Feasts of the Lord – that is how they are designated in Leviticus 23:2, indicating that at designated times and seasons throughout the year the Lord Himself desires to have fellowship with His people. These times and seasons are clearly defined: the weekly Sabbath, the Spring Feast of Pesach and Unleavened Bread, followed soon afterwards by Firstfruits and Shavuot, and the Fall Feasts of Trumpets, Yom Kippur and Shavuot. One can only imagine the anticipation of Almighty God, no less, as from His eternal dwelling place He enters into the time and space which He created for fellowship with His people.

With this perspective it seems strange that Christians continue to observe an alternative calendar of their own devising, asking God to meet with them, and ignoring His own programme in favour of their own. Of course God, through His grace, does meet with His people when they come with expectation, based on the teaching of Yeshua that when two or three are gathered in His Name then He will be among them.

Nevertheless, it does seem that God is gently inviting both Christians and Jews to remember the original Feasts and readjust their calendar. There must be many good reasons for this, especially a move to harmony of purpose between Jews and Christians and also a recognition of the days of preparation leading up to the return of Yeshua.

The Place of Christians among the Covenant People

I am not sure that the term Christian is any longer adequate to describe those chosen among the Gentile nations to enter the Covenant purposes of God along with those who are sanctified by the Blood of Yeshua among the Children of Israel (known as Messianic Jews).

Nevertheless, let us use it here for the time being, as long as we realise that we are describing a group of people who are born again by the Spirit of God, living by faith in Yeshua HaMashiach, sanctified by His Blood. Whilst there is to be order and discipline in the congregations of believers we are not talking about those who call themselves Christians but only live out a dry religion, such that Yeshua would say, “I never knew you”.

Those called by faith from the Gentile world are pictured by Paul in Romans 11 as joining an existing olive tree, not replacing it. This olive tree is indicative of the Israel of God – those from Israel who are sanctified by the Blood of Yeshua. This point is important.

This is the Covenant community that goes back to father Abraham and to Isaac and Jacob and is emerging in growing numbers as those who live in the fulfilment of God’s Covenant plan through Yeshua. This community is widened to include believing Gentiles and is called the one new man by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 2.

Traditions

The nation of Israel, given the Feasts of the Lord thousands of years ago, have celebrated them over all these centuries. What has emerged, therefore, are Feasts that are both biblical and
traditional. Traditions have been added to the simple instructions of the Torah so that families and communities celebrate together in memorable ways throughout the yearly cycle.

Yet tradition can have a negative effect as well as a positive effect if we take our eyes off the call to meet with God and reduce the Feasts to a human celebration alone.

There are traditions in the Jewish communities as well as in the Christian communities. I suggest that Christians should be careful to distinguish tradition from biblical injunction as we seek to strengthen our celebration of the original Feasts of the Lord.

To this end I would like to issue two challenges.

**Challenge 1**

The big adjustment for Christians to make is to actually celebrate the original Feasts of the Lord, moving away from the alternative Christian calendar. A lot of the time we simply use the Feasts as a teaching aid to introduce us to the Jewish world, but surely, as members of the Covenant community we should celebrate more than demonstrate.

But we cannot celebrate alone, Gentiles in one corner and Jews in another. So the first challenge is to consider how Messianic Jews and Christians can celebrate the Feasts together whilst also scattered around the world. Is it possible? Of course: for centuries the Jews have been scattered around the world and yet have a way of being one people at the time of the Feasts.

**Challenge 2**

We need to distinguish the call of God to come into His presence at the Feasts from the call of the world into religious tradition. Christians are not obliged to take on the Jewish traditions that, though good, are not necessarily biblical. Let us go back to the Bible and see for ourselves how God defined the Feasts. Let us go beyond just the literal and consider the way Yeshua would lead us to celebrate the Feasts in memory of Him and in anticipation of His coming.

In seeking to restore the Feasts let us seek also the freshness and life of His Spirit. This moves us into a prophetic and intercessory realm.

There is no answer for us than to move into a meaningful time of prayer on this issue. Only then will we find the fullness of blessing and the deeper restoration.

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This lesson

Feast of Tabernacles

Head of Household: This lesson provides Bible passages and notes to inform you and your family about the Feast of God called “Feast of Tabernacles (Booths).” Please read all passages and notes aloud to your family.

“SUKKOT” (Heb. t/Ksu; “booths” or “tabernacles”), the festival, beginning on the 15th day of Tishri, which commemorates the sukkot in which the Children of Israel dwelt in the wilderness after the Exodus. The festival lasts for seven days, of which the first ... is a yom tov (a festival on which work is prohibited).

In the Bible: Tabernacles, the “feast of ingathering” (Ex. 23:16:ba; 34:22ba), was celebrated by the Israelites at the time of the ingathering from the threshing floor and wine press (Deut. 1:13; cf. Ex. 23:16; Lev. 23:39a) “at the end of the year” (Ex. 23:16; 34:22; Lev. 23:34-36, 39-43; Num. 29:12-38; Deut. 16:13-15).”

The Messiahian of The Feast of Tabernacles

Clearly Prophesied Zechariah 14 (For studying: please read entire chapter aloud noting each time Feast of Tabernacles is mentioned)

Water Libation Ceremony:
“During the Feast of Tabernacles, the intense anticipation of rain came to be reflected in the Temple services. Each morning of Tabernacles, a water libation (sacrificial pouring out of a liquid) was offered to the LORD as a visual prayer for rain. Shortly after dawn each morning, while the many sacrifices were being prepared. The high priest was accompanied by a joyous procession of music and worshipers down to the Pool of Siloam.

The high priest carried a golden pitcher capable of holding little more than a quart of water. He carefully dipped the pitcher into the pool and brought it back to the Temple Mount.

... The high priest with the water from the Pool of Siloam had reached the southern gate of the Temple. It was known as the Water Gate because of this ceremony. As he entered, three blasts of the silver trumpets sounded from the Temple, and the priests with one voice repeated the words of Isaiah, “Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation (Isa. 12:3).”

... As the high priest poured out the water libration before the LORD, a drink offering of wine was simultaneously poured into the other basin. Three blasts of the silver trumpets immediately followed the pouring and signaled the start of the Temple music. The people listened as a choir of Levites sang the Hallel (i.e., the praise Psalms, 113-118). At the proper time, the congregation waved their palm branches toward the altar and joined in singing: “Save now, I pray, O LORD; O LORD, I pray, send now prosperity” (Psalm 118:25).

At the same time the priests, with palm branches in hand, marched around the altar. Psalm 118 was viewed as a messianic psalm and as such gave the feast a messianic emphasis.

This is why Jesus was greeted by the crowds shouting Hosanna (Hebrew for “Save now” in Ps. 118:25) and waving palm branches [etrog & lulav] on His triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Mt. 21:8-9; Lk. 19:38; Jn. 12:13).

They viewed Him as the Messiah King, come to deliver (“save now”) Israel in fulfillment of Psalm 118. They hailed Him with the messianic imagery of palm branches from the Feast of Tabernacles.

The same imagery is in view in Revelation 7:9-10 where redeemed saints worship, with palm branches in hand, around the throne of God and the Lamb.

... Soon after the celebration was under way, a group of Levites gathered in the Inner Court in what was known as the Court of the Israelites. Once formed, the group of Levites moved through the Nicanor Gate to stand at the top of the fifteen steps leading down to the Court of Women. The sound of Temple flutes, trumpets, harps, and other stringed instruments swelled as the Levites sang the fifteen Psalms of Degrees (Psalms 120-134). With each new psalm they descended to the next step.

... John recorded that it was the day after The Feast of Tabernacles (the eighth day), which was considered a sabbath, when Jesus returned from the Mount of Olives to teach in the Temple (Jn. 8:2; cf. 7:2, 37). As the Pharisees came to entrap Him, Jesus proclaimed, “I am the light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life” (Jn. 8:12).

The Pharisees did not question the meaning of His statement. They knew it was a messianic claim, for they immediately called Him a liar.”

Fundamental “Feast of Tabernacles” Bible Passages (to be read aloud)

Tabernacles - One of Three Pilgrim Feasts Exodus 23:17 Exodus 34:22-23 Deuteronomy 16:16
Tabernacles - A Feast of “Booths” & “Celebration” Leviticus 23:33-43
Tabernacles - Feast of Many Offerings Numbers 29:12-39
Tabernacles - Sabbatical Year Requirement Deuteronomy 31:10-13

“The Four Species” - Leviticus 23:40

Etrog - “Goodly Tree” - Citrus - Hebrew: rd;h (hadar) Psalm 1:3 - Tree - smells good/tastes good
Lulav - “Palm Trees” - Palm - Hebrew: rm;T (tamar) Psalm 1:1 - Scornful - smells bad/tastes good
Lulav - “Thick Trees” - Myrtle - Hebrew: tbo; (avot) Psalm 1:1 - Sinners - smells good/tastes bad
Lulav - “Willows of the Brook” - Willow - Hebrew: br;j; (arav) Psalm 1:1 - Ungodly - smells bad/tastes bad

For you to study on the topic: Read aloud: Isaiah 12, Psalm 118, John 7:37-44; 8: 12-30 and Revelation 7:9-10 Discuss & write down the ways Jesus reveals Himself as Messiah during Tabernacles.

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Written by:
John D. Garr, Ph.D.

In Matthew 11:13, Jesus made this profound, yet enigmatic, statement: “All the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John” (NIV).

Luke’s version of this declaration expanded what Jesus meant: “The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the gospel of the kingdom of God had been preached” (Luke 16:16, NASB). The question that leaps off this page of Matthew’s Gospel is this, How did “the Law” prophesy? It is quite easy to understand how “the Prophets” prophesied, but how is it possible that “The Law” prophesied?

The Sacred Texts

First of all, it is essential to understand the subdivisions of the Hebrew Scriptures that were already in place within the Jewish community by the time of Jesus and probably as early as 200 BC.

The Bible of the Jews was described as the TaNaKh, with the three letters of that Hebrew term serving as an acronym: T (t) for Torah or “Law,” N (n) for Nevi’im or “Prophets,” and K (k) for Ketuvim or “Writings.” The Torah was the five books of Moses. The Nevi’im were the writings of the prophets. The Ketuvim began with the Book of Psalms and included all of the hagiography, the sacred historical and poetic texts.

Jesus demonstrated his understanding of the three divisions of the Hebrew Scriptures when he reminded the two disciples who walked with him on the road to Emmaus following his resurrection that “everything written about me in the Law of Moses, in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, was destined to be fulfilled.” Then, using the biblical principle that “in the mouth of two or three witnesses, everything is established” (Deuteronomy 17:6; Matthew 18:16), he “opened their minds that they might comprehend the Scriptures” (Luke 24:44, NJB; 24:45, NKJV).

Jesus’ use of this teaching methodology proved that he maintained continuity with the rest of his fellow Jews by using the three parts of the TaNaKh to substantiate his teachings. In this conversation, he made it clear that not only did the Torah and the Prophets prophesy of him but also the rest Writings of the Hebrew Scriptures had also been written to reveal him.

The Dynamics of Messianic Prophecy

There is a scarlet thread that is woven into the very fabric of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. This is the ever-unfolding story of the Messiah who was to redeem the entire world from slavery to sin and to establish the dominion of God in a kingdom of universal shalom (the peace of God).

Messianism, then, is at the very heart of Scripture. The very first promise in the Bible, the protoevangelion, is a messianic prophecy in which God declared that Eve’s son would crush the serpent’s head (Genesis 3:15). The very last promise in the Bible is also a messianic prophecy wherein Jesus said to John, “The one who testifies to these things says, Surely I am coming soon” (Revelation 22:20, RSV).

Scores of messianic prophecies are crystal clear because the “prophets spoke as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit”
(2 Peter 1:21, NIV). These include such prophecies as “A virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14); “Unto us a child is born . . . and he shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6, NASB); “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities” (Isaiah 53:5); and “Bethlehem Ephratah . . . out of you will come for me the one who will be ruler over Israel” (Micah 5:2).

Prophetic Pictures of the Messiah

While the prophets were prolific in their predictions about the Messiah, the rest of the Hebrew Scriptures also prophesied of the coming Son of Man through the circumstances and events that transpired in the lives of God’s chosen people. Everything that Israel did was prophetic. The Torah prophesied because it was a “shadow of good things to come,” though it “was not the very image” of what was coming (Hebrews 10:1).

It presented pictures of what would happen in the Messianic era. Its people and events were “shadows of things to come,” but “the reality is found in Christ” (Colossians 2:17, NJB).

Under this predictive principle, the entire Tabernacle contained pictures of the Messiah in type and shadow, simile and metaphor, parable and allegory, as is abundantly demonstrated throughout the Book of Hebrews.

The Sabbath and all of God’s festivals (Leviticus 23) were also prophetic of the Messiah (Colossians 2:17).

Likewise, the lives and ministries of Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15; Acts 3:22), Joshua (Hebrews 4:8), David (Psalm 22:16), Solomon (Matthew 12:42), and Zerubbabel (Haggai 2:3; Zechariah 4:6-10) also contained elements that prophesied of the Messiah.

Additionally, the Hebrew Scriptures are filled to the brim with types of the Messiah, all of which met their antitypes in the life and ministry of Jesus. The prophets, the priests, and the kings were types of Christ. The sacrifices of the Temple, the systems of worship, and even the lives of pagan kings were predictive of the Messiah. Many are still prophetic of yet future events that will be manifest when Messiah Yeshua returns.

The Word Made Flesh

Yeshua was the incarnate Word of God, God manifest in the flesh. He was Son of God and Son of Man. Everything that was contained in the written record of the Word of God that issued forth from the presence of the Eternal Father was, therefore, a part of the essence of the Living Word, Jesus Christ. The Messiah is everywhere in the Hebrew Scriptures.

This is why Jesus commended his Jewish compatriots for searching the Scriptures diligently, thinking that in them they had eternal life and why he informed them that “these are the very Scriptures that testify about me” (John 5:39).

The Hebrew Scriptures “are able to you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:15). Search them with all of your heart. The Law, Prophets, and Writings all prophesy of the Son of God, Yeshua HaMashiach.

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Prophetical Perspectives
The Signs of the Coming of the Messiah, part II

Written by:
Keijo Lindeman

"For we know in part and we prophesy in part" (1 Cor. 13:9).

Yeshua’s teaching about the signs of His coming

"Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. ‘Do you see all these things?’, he asked, ‘I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.’ As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, his disciples came to him privately. ‘Tell us’, they said, ‘when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming [Greek ses parusias = to your coming] and of the end of the age [Greek aion, Hebrew haOlam]?’” (Matthew 24:1-3, NIV).

Just before his suffering and death on the cross Yeshua told his disciples that the beautiful and sumptuous Temple in Jerusalem would be demolished.

The disciples must have been extremely upset about the words of their Master telling them that the destruction of the beautiful and sumptuous Temple would be so complete that no stone would be left on another. (This scenario came true in 70 AD through the Roman army.) The disciples, all shaken, asked Yeshua (Jesus) when this would happen and what would be the sign of his coming and of the end of the age. Yeshua responded by giving a long prophetic speech where he enumerated many signs that would precede his return. In our previous edition of Yovel we began to study these signs. We considered e.g. the great deception of the end time, wars and rumours of war, natural disasters, unusual weather phenomena, the invasion of lawlessness, the gospel of the Kingdom and the last revival. In this paper we will continue to discuss the signs of Messiah’s coming and of the end of the age.

The abomination that causes desolation standing in the holy place

“So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation’, spoken of through the prophet Daniel – let the reader understand – then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath” (Matthew 24:15-20).

“His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice. Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation” (Daniel 11:31).

The original Hebrew for "the abomination that causes desolation" is Shikuts Meshomem. Shikuts has the meanings ‘disgusting, revolting, repulsiveness’. This word is used to describe the abominable idols of Egypt (Deut.29:16-17) and ‘vile images’ in the Temple of Jerusalem that caused God’s wrath (Ezek. 5:11). Meshomem
Jerusalem with his armed forces, Nebuchadnezzar, to invade. The wrath, allowed the king of Babylonia to come to power. The land enjoyed its sabbath rests; all the time of its sabbath was brought low. The abomination of desolation during Antiochus Epiphanes happened on the ninth day of the fifth month, the month of Av. The abomination brought about by the king of Babylon hit Jerusalem and the First Temple, built by King Solomon (round year 960 BC, IRT, Unger 1968). The temple was burned down and its treasures and the remnant of the people were taken to exile to Babylon for seventy years (586 BC).

The abomination that causes desolation during Antiochus Epiphanes

"The goat became very great, but at the height of his power his large horn was broken off, and in its place four prominent horns grew up towards the four winds of heaven. Out of one of them came another horn, which started small but grew in power to the south and to the east and towards the Beautiful Land. It grew until it reached the host of the heavens and it threw some of the starry host down to the earth and trampled on them. It set itself up to be as great as the Prince of the host; it took away the daily sacrifice from him, and the place of his sanctuary was brought low. Because of rebellion, the host of the saints, and the daily sacrifice were given over to it. It prospered in everything it did; and truth was thrown to the ground ... He said: 'I am going to tell you what will happen later in the time of wrath, because the vision concerns the appointed time of the end. The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia. The shaggy goat is the king of Greece, and the large horn between his eyes is the first king. The four horns that replaced the one that was broken off represent four kingdoms that will emerge form his nation but will not have the same power. In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a stern-faced king, a master of intrigue, will arise. He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy the mighty men and the holy people. He will cause deceit to prosper, and he will consider himself superior. When they feel secure, he will destroy many and take his stand against the Prince of princes. Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power" (Daniel 8:12-19, 20-25).

When the time of Babylon’s empire came to an end and Persia took over, Cyrus, king of Persia, ordered the temple to be rebuilt in Jerusalem (about 538 BC; 2 Chr.36:22-23; Ezra 1).

Part of Jewish exiles returned, led by Ezra the priest, Haggai the prophet and Zerubbabel the governor, to rebuild the Second Temple of Jerusalem, the so-called Zerubbabel’s Temple. This sanctuary, modest compared to Solomon’s Temple, was eventually completed after great difficulties on the third of the month of Adar (around 516 BC; Ezra 6:15; Haggai 2:1-9). This temple was to be desecrated by the Seleucid King Antiochus Epiphanes, in 167 BC.

Daniel’s vision in Daniel chapter 8 describes how a two-horned ram, i.e. Media and Persia, starts conquering the world and crushes the Babylonian empire in 539 BC.

After that comes the shaggy goat, Greece, and overthrows Persia under the leadership of Alexander the Great (the big horn) in 331 BC. (The events described in Daniel 8 will have their second prophetic fulfillment also during the end time wrath; Dan.8:17-21.

The bear (Persia/Iran) represents the camp of Gog and the goat (Greece) represents the Western Nato-camp in the end time’s world war; Ezek.38:5.)

Alexander the Great died at the early age of 33 years during his military expedition to India in 323 BC. After his death his empire was divided in four parts (horns) between his generals. Cassander ruled Macedonia, Lycimachus ruled Thrace and Asia Minor, Ptolemy I ruled Egypt (the kingdom of the king of the South) and Seleucus ruled Syria (king of the North’s territory) and the Middle East (Payne, 1973).

From the horn of the king of the North rose a tiny horn, Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 BC), also called the antichrist of the Old Testament.

The two books of the Maccabees in the Apocrypha, especially 1 Macc. 1, tell about the terror reign of Antiochus. He sought to hellenize by force the Jewish nation and the people of Jerusalem. He sought to replace by pagan culture and customs the feasts and the sabbath the God of Israel had given the Jews.

These God’s appointed times, circumcision and reading of the Holy Scriptures, Torah included, were forbidden on pain of death. Worship in the Temple of Jerusalem was forbidden, and instead, the Temple was made a place of worship to the Greek idol Zeus with its temple prostitutes. The land and the people were exploited materially, too.

The abomination that causes desolation (the altar of idols) was erected in the Temple on the 15th of Kislev (the 9th month in the Jewish calendar), and on the 25th of the same month pigs were offered to idols on the altar that had been built in the Temple. Some of the Jews took part in the Hellenistic idolatry with the Gentiles.

The priest Mattathias with his five sons rose to oppose this abomination. After the death of Mattathias, his son Judas, nicknamed Maccabee, or the Hammer, took the leadership of the freedom fighters. With his small group of men and through guerrilla strategy he succeeded in winning many battles against Antiochus’ overpowering enemy forces.

Jerusalem and the entire area of the Jewish state were delivered from the enemy, the Temple was cleansed from infectious idolatry and rededicated in 164 BC. Tyrant Antiochus perished without a hu-
man hand when he, according to Daniel’s prophecy, died in agonizing pains as worms were eating his flesh (2Macc.9).

The rededication of the Temple took place on the same day as the desecration had taken place, the 25th of Kislev. Since those days it has been a custom to celebrate Hanukkah, the feast commemorating the rededication, on the 25th of Kislev (occurs usually in December) (1Macc.4:36-64;2Macc.10:1-9).

In the New Testament we read how Yeshua was walking in the Temple area at the time of Hanukkah, and how he then revealed he was the Messiah (John 10:22-25).

One of the traditions of this holiday is the lighting of a candlestick with eight candles.

Abomination under the rule of Rome

“When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near.

Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. For this is the time of punishment in fulfilment of all that has been written. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled” (Luke 21:20-24).

Herod the Great began the construction and expansion of the Second Temple (Zerubbabel’s Temple). The work began round 20 BC, and continued almost until the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD. In the times of Yeshua the construction works had been going on for 46 years (John 2:20).

When all the construction and decoration works were completed, the former modest Zerubbabel’s Temple surpassed the sumptuous Temple of Solomon in beauty and grandeur.

The abomination caused desolation once more in the history of the Temple during the Roman reign, when the Roman army besieged Jerusalem for about three years. During a break in the siege the disciples of Yeshua fled – as their Master had instructed them - leaving Jerusalem and Judah for Pella in today’s Jordan.

Jerusalem was finally occupied in 70 AD and the Temple was demolished. Jews were taken captive and brought to Rome where they were sold as slaves among all nations.

This again happened on the 9th of Av, the 5th month (the Jews fast on the 9th of Av commemorating thus the two destructions of the Temple; Zach.8:19).

The land of the Jews was to be desolate and the people of the land to be dispersed among the nations for two thousand years. Jerusalem was to be trampled on by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. (Many people think that the times of the Gentiles came to an end when Israel regained rule over the entire Jerusalem in the Six-day War in 1967. But we should bear in mind that the Temple area is still under the rule of Muslim abomination. There are scholars who say that the times of the Gentiles are not yet fulfilled, because Jerusalem will still be attacked by the Gentiles in the end time.)

During Emperor Hadrian (117-138) Rome tightened its hold on Jerusalem. Hadrian forbid circumcision and changed Jerusalem’s name to Aelia Capitolina. Aelia referred to Hadrian’s surname Aelius and Capitolina reminded of The Roman Capitolium with its temples of Jupiter, the chief deity of Roman religion.

The purpose was to build a temple for Jupiter in Jerusalem. This brought about a revolt among the Jews left in the city. Simon Kosheba from the line of David (he took the name of Bar Kochba, ‘son of the star’ that Rabbi Akiva declared messiah) became the leader and he and his men started to...
fight the Romans (132-135 AD). The Romans put down the rebellion and the desolation of the Jewish state for nearly two millennia was a fact.

**Dome of the Rock and Al Aqsa – the Islamic abominations**

The reign of the united Roman Empire in Jerusalem continued till 395 AD when the Empire was divided into the western part and the eastern part i.e. Byzantine Empire which ruled the holy city up to 638, the year Caliph Omar I (634-644), the founder of Muslim superpower, conquered Jerusalem.

A temple of worship and a primitive mosque, so called Omar’s Mosque, were built on the Temple Mount. Later on, in 691, the Dome of the Rock was built in the holy place.

Al Aqsa was also built on the Mount, but the original mosque was demolished in an earthquake round 674 AD, and the present Al Aqsa was built in its place in 747. Jerusalem has been ruled in turn by crusaders (1099-1291), Islamic Mamluks, (1250-1516), Turks (1516-1917), the British (1917-1947), Jordanians (1947-1967), and the Israelis (since 1967), but the Islamic abominations, the Dome of the Rock and Al Aqsa, keep standing on the Temple Mount.

When the time comes, at Messiah’s return at the latest, these two abominations will be destroyed, making way to the third Temple (Isa.2:1-4; Micah 4:1-4). This will happen most probably when Messiah’s feet are standing on the Mount of Olives and the mountain will part into a huge valley. Then, at the latest, those Islamic abominations will fall into the ravine and be destroyed.

**Abomination in the end time**

“This is the word of the Lord concerning Israel: the Lord, who stretches out the heavens, who lays the foundation of the earth, and who forms the spirit of man within him, declares: ‘I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling. Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem. On that day when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All that try to move it will injure themselves... The Lord will save the dwellings of Judah first’” (Zech.12:1-3,7a)

“A day of the Lord is coming when your plunder will be divided among you: I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. Half of the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people will not be taken from the city” (Zech.14:1-2).

“I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, ‘Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count the worshipers there. But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months’” (Rev.11:1-2).

“In those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will enter into judgment against them concerning my inheritance, my people Israel, for they scattered my people among the nations and divided up my land. They cast lots for my people and traded boys for prostitutes; they sold girls for wine that they might drink. Now what have you against me, O Tyre and Sidon and all you regions of Philistia? Are you repaying me for something I have done? If you are paying me back, I will swiftly and speedily return on your own heads what you have done... Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare for war! Rouse the warriors! Let all the fighting men draw near and attack” (Joel 3:1-4,9).

Once more the abomination that causes desolation will touch Jerusalem and the Temple Mount area in the end time, on the day of the Lord. The nations around Israel and from farther away, all those who hate Israel and the
God of Israel, will attack Jerusalem. Zechariah and Joel’s prophecies speak about half of Jerusalem, area of Judah and regions of Philistines, division of God’s land and inheritance, and the holy war. What does this mean?

The British got dominion of Israel when General Allenby conquered it from the Turks at the end of World War I in 1917. Britain was granted mandate over Israel. In 1947, the 29th November, the United Nations passed a plan for the division of the Middle East area between Jews and Arabs.

This resulted in the declaration of independence of Israel, given by David Ben Gurion on the 14th of May 1948, in Tel Aviv. The outnumbering Arab nations around Israel never accepted this but started a war against Israel striving to sweep the newly born state of Israel into the Mediterranean.

Arab propaganda went as far as to declare that the Arabs living in that area should leave and stay away until all the Jews were wiped off to the sea. And once the war was over, they could return from their voluntary exile and take possession of the Jews’ houses and infrastructure. Some of them followed Arab propaganda and fled.

But as it happens, Israel was not wiped off to the sea, in spite of experts’ expectations. Instead, the Jewish state of the end time was born, according to biblical prophecies, as a sign of the approaching return of Messiah. Those Arabs who had fled from the country could not or dared not return, and that’s how the issue of Palestinian refugees came about (Ezek.36-37).

Naturally there are other reasons to this Palestinian refugee problem, but this particular cause is generally totally ignored, and that is why we should bring it up. During these past decades Arab nations have had no desire or inclination to solve Palestinian refugee problem – contrary to how Finland dealt with the Karelian refugees – but the problem has been expressly left open with the intention of putting pressure on Israel.

While addressing this problem there is something else that has not been spoken of: the fact that hundreds of thousands of Jews living in different Arab nations have been forced to move to Israel and, in many cases, to flee for their life empty handed, leaving all their possessions in the Arab countries. In all fairness, these facts should be brought up as well.

The state of Israel survived the War of Independence. Jordan took over the so-called West Bank, i.e. ancient Judah and Samaria, and eastern Jerusalem.

In the later Six-day War between Israel and her Arab neighbours in 1967 Israel took over West Bank and east-Jerusalem from Jordan.

In the past few years the situation in these areas has developed to the point that plans are made to establish a sovereign Palestinian state in the West Bank, with east-Jerusalem as its capital.

This has caused a huge crisis in Israel and in the whole Mideast area (impacting even global politics), and led to unrelenting Palestinian terrorism (mostly Jihad and Hamas suicide bombers killing innocent civilians). Especially Iran, ancient Persia, keeps threatening to wipe off Israel and uses as his tool Hizbollah, a terrorist organization based in Lebanon.

Iran also wants to develop nuclear weapons, which makes the situation very alarming for Israel, Sunni Muslims, and the whole world.

The Bible has prophesied all this thousands of years ago. During the days of Emperor Hadrian and Bar Kochba, the Romans changed the name of Israel to Syria Palestina, or Philistia, according to Israel’s ancient archenemies, the Philistines, and the name of Jerusalem was changed to Aelia Capitolina.

The purpose of these changes was to disparage the Jews who dared to rebel against the Roman Empire. The Latin ‘Philistina’ gave the English ‘Philistine’ and its modern version ‘Palestine’. As you can see, Palestine is the name the Romans made up to ridicule Israel. There is no specific Palestinian race or people; the so-called Palestinians are mainly people from surrounding Arab nations (e.g. Egypt and Saudi Arabia) who assumed Palestinian identity and nationality in Yasser Arafat’s days.

The prophet Joel prophesies in chapter 3 that in those days when the Lord restores the fortunes of Judah (West Bank) and Jerusalem, and gathers all the nations to the valley of Jehoshaphat (i.e. ‘the Lord judges’ ) to be judged, there will be great controversy over the territories of Philistines, i.e. Palestinians.

Tyro and Sidon, that is Hizbollah terrorists based in southern Lebanon, supported by Iran and Syria and shooting rockets towards Israel’s northern settlements, and the militants of Hamas, a terrorist organization ruling in Gaza, will be involved in the conflict. Zechariah mentions the dwellings of Judah, the West Bank area, that the Lord will deliver first from the enemy.

The Lord permits this crisis in the Middle East in order to save his people Israel through tribulations first to receive their Messiah and then to judge the nations that hate God and Israel and have divided the land God has promised Israel; nations that try to destroy Israel and wipe off the very name of Israel. (Gen.15:18; Deut.34:4; Ezek.36:24-29; Ps.83.)

The ultimate dispute will be over Jerusalem. Since U.S. President Trump recognized Jerusalem as Israel’s capital city and transfer-
red their embassy to Jerusalem, this dispute has escalated. A few other countries have followed U.S. example. There will be a time when the nations surrounding Is-rael and other nations and quar-
ters (EU, UN, and the Papal Seat
in Rome are involved in Jerusa-
lem issue) will besiege and attack
Jerusalem on the day of the Lord.
They will succeed and occupy the
city, and they will force Israel to
agree to the division of Israel and
Jerusalem.

Half of the city (evidently East-
Jerusalem) will experience times of
agony; people are forced to
leave their homes, women are
raped and houses are ransacked.
(Accoding to one interpretation
half of the city, that is East-Jeru-
salem, came into Israel’s possess-
sion in the Six-day War in 1967,
and the prophecy was then ful-
filled. When you read Zechariah
chapters 12 – 14 this explanation
does not seem valid in the light
of the overall contents of these
chapters.)

Jerusalem and the Temple Mount
will again be victims of abomina-
tion that causes desolation. Many
scholars believe that time to last
42 months or three and a half
years, the time mentioned in the
Book of Revelation.

But the end will be that Israel
will be delivered from her ene-
mies, and that she will receive
in faith her Messiah who, with
his holy angels and resurrected
saints, comes to rescue Israel
from destruction, judge hostile
Gentiles, and establish his King-
dom of Peace on earth (Zec.
12, 14; Rev.19:11-20:6; 2 Tim.1:6-
10; Jude 14-15). When Messiah
comes to judge and reign, the
Mideast crisis will have its righ-
teous solution, and Israel and
her neighbours will live in perfect
harmony, a blessing on the earth.
(Isa.19; Jer.12:14-17).

There will also be a remnant of
Palestinians who believe in the
God of Israel.

Abomination in God’s temple

“The people of Judah have done
evil in my eyes, declares the Lord.
They have set up their detestable
idols in the house that bears
my Name and have defiled it”
(Jer.7:30).

“The children gather wood, the
fathers light the fire, and the wo-
men knead the dough and make
cakes of bread for the Queen of
Heaven. They pour out drink of-
ferings to other gods to provoke me
to anger” (Jer. 7:18).

“Then he brought me to the en-
trance to the north gate of the
house of the Lord, and I saw wo-
men sitting there, mourning for
Tammuz. He said to me, ‘Do you
see this, son of man? You will see
things that are even more detes-
table than this.’ He then brought
me into the inner court of the
house of the Lord. And there at
the entrance to the temple, be-
 tween the portico and the altar,
were about twenty-five men.
With their backs towards the
temple of the Lord and their faces
towards the east, they were bow-
ing down to the sun in the east”
(Ezek.8:14-16).

“Don’t you know that you yours-
elves are God’s temple and that
God’s Spirit lives in you? If
anyone destroys God’s temple,
God will destroy him, for God’s
temple is sacred, and you are that
temple” (1 Cor.3:16-17).

“He gave me this explanation:
The fourth beast is a fourth king-
dom that will appear on earth. It
will be different from all the ot-
er kingdoms and will devour the
whole earth, trampling it down
and crushing it. The ten horns
are ten kings who will come from
this kingdom. After them anot-
her king will arise, different from
the earlier ones; he will subdue
three kings. He will speak against
the Most High and oppress his
saints and try to change the set
times and the laws. The saints
will be handed over to him for a
time, times and half a time. But
the court will sit, and his power
will be taken away and comple-
tely destroyed for ever. Then the
sovereignty, power and greatness
of the kingdoms under the who-
le heaven will be handed over
to the saints, the people of the
Most High. His kingdom will be
an everlasting kingdom, and all
rulers will worship and obey him”
(Dan.
7:23-27).

In Old Testament times God re-
anked men and women of Judah
through prophet Jeremiah, for
they had defiled the Temple of
the Lord with abominations and
made offerings to the Queen of
Heaven.

Through prophet Ezekiel God re-
anked them for having defiled the
Temple with worship of Tammuz
and bowing to the sun. The 25th
of December was the celebrated
birthday of sun god in the Baby-
lonian cult of Semiramis-Tammuz.

One of this cult’s symbols was
mother Semiramis with the child
Tammuz in her arms. The abomi-
nation of this Babylonian mystery
religion was so big that the Spirit
of the Lord left the Temple and
the Lord punished his people by
sending them to exile (Ezek.
11-12).

A large part of God’s church has
been contaminated by this Ba-
bylonian mystery religion. Da-
niel chapter seven speaks about
the horn of the Roman beast –
Emperor’s throne and Papal Seat
thereafter – which has changed
the times (calendar and God’s ap-
pointed times) and the law (or
Torah= teachings, instructions).

For biblical calendar Rome substi-
tuted first the Julian calendar in
45 BC and later its improved ver-
sion, Gregorian calendar, in 1582
AD, named after its instigator
Pope Gregorianus XIII. The whole
world observes this calendar ex-
cept for Israel that keeps to the
calendar God gave (Ex.
12:1-11).

As we can read in the New Testa-
mament, the Apostolic early church
observed Sabbath and God-ap-
pointed feasts of the Lord also
in Greek regions (Lev.23; John
2:1-4, 17:1-4,
20:6-7, 16, 27:9; 1Cor.5:6-8). In
321 AD, the Papal Seat, taking
orders from Constantine, chan-
ged the week rest from Sabbath
to Sunday, i.e. to the day of the
sun according to the Babylonian
mystery religion.

The early church celebrated Pas-
sover originally on the 14th of
Nisan, but this feast, too, was
clad in Roman clothes to be ob-
served on Sunday following the
full moon after vernal equinox.
The reason was antisemitism, as
we can see from the excerpt from
the documents of the council of
Nicea (in 325 AD).

“In rejecting their custom we may
transmit to our descendants the
legitimate mode of celebrating
Easter. We ought not therefo-
re, to have anything in common
with the Jews, for the Saviour has
shown us another way; our wor-
sip follows a more legitimate
and more convenient course (the
order of the days of the week),
and consequently, in unanimous-
lly adopting this mode, we desire,
Another example of rejection of biblical feasts and embracing of Babylonian mystery religion is the origin of Christmas about which Otava Encyclopedia writes as follows:

"Pagan background and medieval heritage of Christmas: Christian Christmas was transferred to the 25th of December in 350s. The earlier date was in January, at Epiphany. There have been many interpretations and calculations of Christ’s date of birth. It has been placed in spring and in autumn. But no tradition binds it to December. The reasons are elsewhere. In 274 Roman Emperor Aurelian had established a feast to honor the birthday of the sun god (Dies natalis solis in victori) on the 25th of December. This feast has connections to eastern religions, e.g. Mithra-cult.

The date was chosen because around the adoption of Julian calendar the winter solstice occurred on December 25th. Christian church did what it customarily used to do: it did not fight against, but embraced the day and gave it a Christian content. There were two other feasts celebrated in the Roman Empire that had impact on Christmas: the feasts of Saturnalia and Koliada."

Rome imitated Babylonian mystery religion in making Maria the Queen of Heaven. Maria and baby Jesus cult replaced Semiramis-Tammuz cult.

Many other pagan abominations from Babylonian mystery religion have been adopted into Christianity. In the great end time the Word of God sheds no light on the nations that I am going to drive out before you became defiled. Even the land was defiled; so I punished it for its sin, and the land vomited out the nations that were before you” (Lev.18:22,24).

"God's judgement and destruction"

"It is an abomination in God’s eyes and Babylon the Great will suffer God’s judgement and destruction (Rev.17-18)."

Wilkerson’s vision about the abomination of Sodom

"If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads” (Lev.20:13).

"Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexuals nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor.6:9-11).

"Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. They were haughty and did detestable things before me. Therefore I did away with them as you have seen” (Ezek. 16:49-50).

"If he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly” (2 Peter 2:6).

"It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulphur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed” (Luke 17:28-30).

"Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable. ...Do not defile yourselves in any of their ways, because this is how the nations that I am going to drive out before you became defiled. Even the land was defiled; so I punished it for its sin, and the land vomited out the nations that were before you” (Lev.18:22,24).

"And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: ... So because you are lukewarm – neither hot nor cold – I am about to spit you out of my mouth” (Rev. 3:14a,16).

Through its numerous prophecies the Bible makes it clear that on the eve of Yeshua’s return the world will be thoroughly defiled. Violence, wickedness, and sin will be rampant in the world. It will be like in the days of Lot before Sodom and Gomorrah were condemned.

Genesis 19 depicts what life was like in Lot’s days in Sodom. When the angels of God in human attire came to rescue Lot from the destruction that was to come over the city, the violent men of Sodom wanted to have sex with them (19:5 says so plainly in Hebrew).

The angels blinded the men of Sodom and rescued Lot and his daughters from under fire and sulphur, when the Lord destroyed the arrogant of Sodom and Gomorrah who lived in abundance doing detestable things, as a warning example to future generations that pursue the same kind of detestable lifestyle.

Sin and corruption driven men in eternal damnation, but when societies live in the corruption of homosexuality against the order set by God in creation, mankind has reached the point where the condemnation of Sodom (nuclear war included) awaits people and societies overcome by this abhorrent corruption. Apostle Paul says clearly that people who practise those things have deserved death, and not just they but also those who approve of what they do are under the same condemnation (Rom. 1:18-32).

The sin of homosexuality is condemned in the Old as well in the New Testament (Covenant), and those who practise it will not inherit the Kingdom of God unless they repent of their sins. God in his love and mercy gives every sinner, homosexuals included, the chance to repent, to give up the sin they have practised, and to be forgiven and sanctified in the precious name and blood of Yeshua and the Spirit of God, and thus become partakers of God’s Kingdom.

David Wilkerson, in his book The Vision (1974), writes how the abomination of Sodom will invade societies and churches: "There are two forces that prevent homosexuals from surrendering completely to their sin: the society does not approve of them and the church speaks against them in its teaching. But these obstacles disappear when the society no longer is against their sin nor considers it abnormal, but instead encourages them in it, and when the church no longer preaches of their sin but instead backs them up in their sexual behaviour. The floodgates are open, and homosexuals are encouraged to continue in their sin. In my vision I have seen that these two obstacles are wiped off, and when they are removed, chaos follows.” (Vision, p 46.)

We have now come to this time. Societies are no longer against but instead encourage homosexuals, and their partners are granted the same rights as man (male) and wife (female) have in marriage.

Churches as a rule do not call homosexuality a sin nor do they preach against it (nor any other sin as a matter of fact), because the Bible no longer has the status of authority in the church, but everything is permitted in the name of love, tolerance, and equality.

As one cannot undo the fact that the Old and the New Testament condemn the sin of homosexuality, people explain that the commandments belonged only to the times and culture of the OT and Apostle Paul, but do no longer apply to us or our modern and tolerant time.

Churches in many countries (also in Scandinavia) allow homosexuals in church offices and jobs
(even as bishops). There are countries like Finland which are thinking of special forms of marriage service for homosexuals.

We have come to the time when a person who wants to follow the truth of the Bible and admonishes people to repent of their sins (of Sodom, too) faces great opposition, attacks, and persecution, and even risks to be prosecuted. People do not put up with the truth; instead they prefer to listen to those who say “what their itching ears want to hear.” (2 Tim.4:1-5.)

This is the road that brings Sodom’s sentence on church and society (Deut.4:1-2; Rev. 22:18-19; 2 Peter 3:15-16).

Revelation chapters 2 and 3 bear a message to seven churches of Asia Minor that existed in Apostle John’s days (in modern Turkey). These seven churches of the Book of Revelation are a cross-section of the ages of the Holy Spirit and the Church ever since the days of the early church until the Lord’s return. The time of the church of Laodicea (time of “people’s power or democracy”) will be the last period of the church age just before Yeshua’s return.

In Moses’ days God warned Israel not to follow the idolatrous customs and adulterous way of life of pagan nations (e.g. adultery, fornication, incest, homosexuality, and child sacrifice to Molech; Lev.18), or the land would vomit them out, even to exile.

God wiped off all corrupted nations from Israelites’ way when they came to their Promised Land. In his message to the church in Laodicea – the one that would precede his return – the Lord says he will spit them out of his mouth because they are lukewarm.

These are words of warning to the backslidden Christian church; the Lord will spit them out of his mouth because of their lukewarm and hypocritical Christianity and Sodom-like abominations that the end time church tolerates and even favours while rejecting God’s Word and God’s commandments.

This road of Sodom will result in God’s judgment of the world, nuclear war. (Rev.9). Praise to God, there are still plenty of God’s children who want to cling to the truth of the Bible and step out of the dens of sin of Sodom and return to the teachings and practice of the early Apostolic church. (Rev. 18:1-4.)

The Lord will cleanse his true church and restore it for his return (Apt. 3:19.21; Ef. 5:25-27).

Every one is called to take their place in this crowd through believing in Yeshua as their Saviour and Lord, and following him in the truth of God’s Word while waiting for his return.

We will continue to study the signs of Messiah’s return in the next issue of Yovel.

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