

The "New" Church of God Messenger  
A Newsletter for the People of God  
July 2, 2022 --- Issue No. 74

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(Charlotte, North Carolina)

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## Holy Days 2022

Passover – April 16, 2022 (Observed at Sunset the Evening Before)

Unleavened Bread – April 16-22, 2022

Pentecost – June 5, 2022

Trumpets - September 26, 2022

Atonement – October 5, 2022

Tabernacles – October 10-16, 2022

Last Great Day – October 17, 2022

**Articles**  
(1-4 Pages Long)

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The 1993 Academy Awards ceremony was dominated by Steven Spielberg's movie, *Schindler's List*. The film is a brutally graphic look at the atrocities of the Nazi's "Final Solution" for dealing with the Jews of Europe in World War II. It is also a testimonial to one man's determination to rescue as many Jews as possible from the horrors of that Final Solution because he became absolutely compelled to do so.

Oskar Schindler was a Catholic from the Sudetenland who saw the war as a means to make his fortune. An opportunist whose outlook on life was to use every situation to his advantage, he wanted to make his mark on the world by becoming wealthy and enjoying every moment of his life. He was charming, witty, and totally self-indulgent.

In the early 1940s, before the Nazis purged the ghetto, he went to Krakow, Poland, where he made all sorts of black-market deals. He accomplished this by ingratiating himself with the German High Command through his winning personality—and the ever-present bribe.

Soon realizing how desperate the Jewish situation was, he drove a hard bargain with the wealthiest of the Jews still living in the city to bankroll his plans for a factory to make pots and pans and ceramics for the war effort. In return, he made them silent partners in his business and gave them the opportunity to work in the factory. This deal protected them from being taken away by the Nazi SS.

The Nazis had hundreds of lists, and everything depended on which list one was on. The list would determine whether a person lived or died! If one were on a work list of industries vital to the war effort, he would not be sent to the concentration camps.

As Oskar Schindler's factory became more and more successful, he became very rich, giving him the opportunity to hire more workers. Quite often, his bookkeeper would bring someone to his attention who, though he might not make a very valuable employee, would be exterminated because of his health, age, or condition without a job in Schindler's plant. Schindler would feel compelled to bribe an official who made up the lists to put that particular fellow on his list of workers.

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The Jews found safety working for Schindler.

Though he protected his employees, he still was more concerned with making money than with the plight of the Polish Jews. Then, in 1942, something happened to change his attitude: He became a firsthand witness to the Nazi terror. He watched the purge of the Jewish ghetto as Jews were rounded up like cattle and shipped off to work camps, but the old, the very young, and the weak were executed on the spot. The streets ran red with blood!

Schindler protected his workers by keeping them in his factory until the purge was over. He bribed the authorities to leave his people alone. He continued to operate his Krakow factory and make more money until 1944, when the Germans decided to remove all the Jews from the city to the camps for the Final Solution. The Germans closed down Schindler's plant and told him he could relocate to his hometown in the Sudetenland. There he could hire other workers and continue to make his fortune. All his employees, however, would be shipped to Auschwitz.

### **Personal Sacrifice**

Oskar Schindler had everything he had set out to attain: wine, women, and song—and a steamer trunk full of money, enough to support his lavish lifestyle for the rest of his life. It was at this point, though, that he made the decision that would directly affect the lives of 6,500 Jews alive today. He took every bit of his personal fortune and converted it to jewels and gold, using it to bribe the Nazi officials. He convinced them to put the 1,100 Jews from his factory on his list for transfer to his new factory in the Sudetenland.

In the next year, he put his own life on the line more than once, spending every penny he had to save his workers from extermination. Even on the last day of the war, when the surrender had been drawn, and the German troops were given orders to kill all remaining Jews to wipe out any living testimony, he put himself between the soldiers and the people. He reasoned with the soldiers to put down their weapons and go home as men, not murderers. By the end of World War II, out of millions of Polish Jews, only 4,900 were left alive in Poland, and 1,100 of them were Schindler's workers. He had saved almost 25 percent of the remaining Polish Jews, having given up everything he had for them.

On the night the war ended, he told his workers that he had to flee. If he stayed, he would be arrested and tried as a Nazi and a war profiteer (even though, for the last year of the war, the munitions factory he owned never produced one usable piece of ammunition because every night he would recalibrate the machinery to produce substandard products). Schindler and his wife fled for their own lives that night.

The next morning, a lone Soviet officer rode into Schindler's factory compound and announced to the people that they were liberated by the Soviet Union. One of the survivors asked him where they should go. He responded, "Not to the East because you are as disliked there as you were here, and for that matter, it won't be much better for you going to the West either."

"But we are hungry," said the Jewish spokesman. The officer just shrugged. The Jews dispersed, wandering off to find food. They had no idea where they could go, or if they would find any place better than where they were.

### **No Vision**

Oskar Schindler was a man who found himself compelled to do what was honorable. He used everything he had to redeem as many people as he possibly could from absolute terror and sure death, but that was as far as he could take it. Schindler was a mere man with many shortcomings. He left his redeemed people with no clear vision of their future, no plan, and no place to go. They were on their own!

Like those Polish Jews, we have been redeemed from absolute terror and sure death! We, too, live in a perilous world (II Timothy 3:1). But our immortal, almighty Redeemer is not limited by His own failings and powers. He has given us a clear and explicit vision of our future; He has told us where we are going and how we may get there. He has the complete power and authority to ensure that we arrive in our Promised Land. That is what the Feast of Unleavened Bread is all about—how we will get there!

When the war ended, Schindler told the people he had saved, "I must flee." He left them alone and without any idea of what to do next. He had done as much as he could, but he was unable to take them any farther. We, on the other hand, have been given all that we need to complete our journey into true freedom under a Redeemer who will never leave or

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forsake us (Hebrews 13:5).

On the night before He was to lay down everything, He had to redeem the people on His Father's list, Jesus Christ did not tell His followers, "I must flee, and there is no more I can do for you." Rather, He said:

Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know. (John 14:1-4)

Unlike Schindler, Christ told the people on His list that they should know exactly where He was going, what He would be doing, and how to follow Him.

Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (verses 5-6)

Christ gave all that He had for us, but it did not end there. There was and is a work that He would continue to do on our behalf to get us all the way to freedom and the Kingdom of God. He is now preparing a place for us, and He is preparing us for that place.

Herbert Armstrong wrote in the March 1979 issue of *The Good News*:

The picture—the meaning—the symbolism, is not complete with Passover alone. Passover pictures the acceptance of Christ's blood for the REMISSION of *past* sins. It pictures the CRUCIFIED—the DEAD—Christ.

Shall we leave Christ hanging on the cross? The seven days of UNLEAVENED BREAD, following Passover, picture to us the COMPLETE *putting away* of sin, the KEEPING of the commandments—after past sins are forgiven. They picture the life and the work of the RISEN CHRIST—who ascended to the throne of God where He is actively at work in our behalf as our HIGH PRIEST, cleansing us of sin—delivering us completely from its POWER! (pp. 25-26)

The days of Unleavened Bread picture the work that Christ is doing on our behalf—delivering us from sin's power to real freedom! Not only did He redeem us originally, He is continuing to free us, and now we must work with Him by learning how to stay free. We can remain free by keeping the commandments of God (see John 8:31-47; I John 5:3) and living in the way that pleases Him (Colossians 1:10; I Thessalonians 4:1; I John 3:22).

### **Commuted Sentences**

Were Schindler's Jews really free? Or had they merely had their death sentences commuted to a later time?

Schindler paid the ransom, but he failed to finish the job to get them out of harm's way. He left them in a world that is worse now than it was then, and their lot will soon be more dire than it has ever been! This evil world continues as it always has, and it is prophesied to get worse (Matthew 24:12, 21-22; II Timothy 3:1, 13). It is a world where no real freedom has ever existed!

Christ's sacrifice of all He had for us does not give us the right to continue the life we lived before our redemption. If we do, then there is no real freedom in that sacrifice, and we make it of little consequence. We, like Schindler's Jews, have then only had our death sentences temporarily commuted. And our end, as Peter says in II Peter 2:20-21, is worse than the beginning.

John 6 gives strong clues that the miracles and teachings of Jesus that the apostle recounts took place during the days of Unleavened Bread. Christ had multiplied loaves of barley (John 6:9). Barley was the winter harvest that could not be eaten until after the wavesheaf was offered during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Another verse indicates it was around the time of the Passover (verse 4).

Thus, what Christ teaches here has to do with His finishing the job He started with His supreme sacrifice. He says,

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This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent. . . . Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. . . . I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day. (John 6:29, 32-33, 35-40)

Only Christ—of all humanity—could be compared to unleavened bread because His life was perfectly sinless and totally unleavened. He gave His sinless life for our salvation, and we are to eat of Him (verses 48-51)—that is, learning His way of life—so we can be raised at the last day. This is our part in preparing for the place He is preparing for us.

The Jews on Schindler's list escaped only temporarily. Jesus says, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:44). Only "God's list" procures real and lasting freedom! Those whom God has put on His list will forever be free because He is guiding them *all the way to freedom* in His Family through the work His Son, Jesus Christ, has done and is continuing to do to this day!

As Oskar Schindler had his list, God has His. Schindler, after heroically rescuing his 1,100 Jews, went his way, leaving his redeemed to go theirs. God, though, stays with and guides those on His list to complete and total freedom as His sons and daughters.

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## **God's Prophetic Word is Good for the Soul** **(Copyright) by Steven Blackledge (Sonora, California)**

### **When Embraced As HE Intended Himself To Be...**

Hope you all are having a pleasant, and edifying sabbath... Tomorrow is the day many of us recognize Pentecost, and the amazing transformation that can transpire when one trusts, and relies upon the Holy Spirit promised to those who trust in, and repent through the Son of the Living God... I hope that we all continue to appreciate the love our Beloved Father has for us, and recognize the need for HIS SPIRIT to guide us through the maze of lies, and deception this fallen world has been enslaved by... HIS kingdom on earth is the only solution, and thankfully will come to pass once the Prince of Peace triumphantly returns, and ultimately vanquishes God's enemies...

Prophecies that are correctly declared, and rendered via the Word of God remain consistent throughout the ages... As our Father in heaven has foreseen the end from the beginning as HE alone could ever do... When the prophetic content of that which HE alone could ever accurately declare, is deviated from, it of course has, and still continues to mislead individuals who believe utterances based on inspiration from the "father of lies," being the devil himself... How does this possibly help humanity when deceit is spoken of as if from God Himself, and the Truth that His Word alone defines, is shunned simply because the content of it is not what is sought... As their own version of righteousness continues to be embraced through spiritual falsehoods that only lead them astray, as well as leaving them ill prepared for what is coming...

Scripture clearly has recorded this having been an ongoing problem throughout our history, and it all began of course in the Garden of Eden when those famous words from that serpent of old, Satan, were declared, "you shall not surely die."... God was referring to their spiritual state if they indeed partook of the deceit through the knowledge of what was symbolically referred to as the tree of good, and evil, and the result being death... Initially affecting Adam, and Eve's spiritual state of being as sin took root within them, and would lead to more sin... Whose outcome of lies, instead of truth, being more readily, and easily embraced if this state of being continues without spiritual deliverance from the ONE TRUE

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GOD... WHO grants us life in the flesh through the spirit granted us all as an individual creation...

Those that are biblically literate already know that this spiritually depraved state of being spread throughout every human being... Becoming so prevalent, and so evil in thought, and in action that God would have no choice but to destroy HIS creation... Save those who were shown mercy via the ark our Creator instructed Noah to build to save a portion of His creation... This flood took place 1656 years after Adam was formed, and fashioned... Combine those numbers (1+6+5+6), and we have the sum of 18... 18, when divided by 3 is 6, or 666... The number of imperfect mankind that the Word of God again prophecies concerning these end times we are now living in as contained in Revelation chapter 13 declaring:

<sup>16</sup> Also he compels all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead [signifying allegiance to the beast], <sup>17</sup> and that no one will be able to buy or sell, except the one who has the mark, *either* the name of the beast or the number of his name. <sup>18</sup> Here is wisdom. Let the person who has enough insight calculate the number of the beast, for it is the [imperfect] number of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.

A stark reminder of just how omniscient, or all-knowing our Creator is, and that history is indeed repeated when the mistakes of the past are not learned, and rendered as good, and right... Contrary to God's perfect, and life-giving desire for those created for HIS purposes... Those who deviate from HIS WORD as declared by HIS prophets, are plentiful in our day, and age... The reason they flourish and are in abundance is simply because most would rather believe lies, and deceit rather than the reality of their situation... Being defined iniquity does blind one to reality, and opens one's heart, and mind to being influenced by spiritual disillusionment. Isaiah chapter 30 reminds us of this as follows:

<sup>9</sup> For this is a rebellious people, lying sons, Sons who refuse to listen to The law *and* instruction of the Lord; <sup>10</sup> Who say to the seers, “You must not see *visions from God*”; And to the prophets, “You must not prophesy to us what is right! Speak to us pleasant things *and* smooth words, Prophecy [deceitful] illusions [that we will enjoy]. <sup>11</sup> “Get out of the [true] way, turn aside from the path [of God], Stop bothering us with the Holy One of Israel.”

It can be rather easy to fall into a snare of deceit when one has already desired an outcome that appeals to the saving of their physical lives... Even if it entails the reality of losing life for an eternity... But even in this lost spiritual state of being, they believe that eternal life is still theirs, and seeking alternative avenues to exist forevermore are sought... Again, this line of reasoning falls right into the mindset that allows for Lucifer to conjure up false forms of belief, or religions that lead astray those who avoid the Truth concerning mankind's true purpose for living as God has decreed... Christ Jesus came in the flesh, died, and was resurrected to ensure we will ALL have an opportunity, (at God's appointed time for each of us), to have the very Truth our Savior defines in every way, to grant us life everlasting... If we embrace every facet of what our Father in heaven has declared righteous, and perfect...

Being a lying prophet, or teacher is not a position any of us should hold fast to for unrighteous gain both physically, and of course spiritually... Because one often is seduced into believing that nothing will ever occur to them, or judgment will come upon those who have other's best interests at heart... Satan has delusions of grandeur as he aspires to be like the Most High, and believes his kingdom, which now permeates this world we live in, will endure forever... Again, sin makes one subject to delusional, and irrational thinking... Leading to despair, and death in the end... No one has the right, nor should EVER change that which God has decreed as perfect... Why would it ever need to be changed if it is flawless to begin with?... Jeremiah chapter 14 lays it out very plainly what God thinks about such a spiritually fallen state, and the outcome for those who continue down this road to perdition:

<sup>14</sup> Then the Lord said to me, “The [counterfeit] prophets are prophesying lies in My Name. I have neither sent them nor authorized them nor spoken to them. They are prophesying to you made-up visions [pretending to call forth responses from handmade gods], a worthless divination and the deceit of their own mind. <sup>15</sup> Therefore, thus says the Lord concerning the [false] prophets who are prophesying in My Name, although I did not send them—yet they keep saying, ‘Sword and famine shall not be in this land’: by sword and famine those prophets shall meet their end *and* be consumed. <sup>16</sup> And the people to whom they are prophesying will be thrown out into the streets of Jerusalem, victims of famine and sword; and they will have no one to bury them—neither them, nor their wives, nor their sons, nor their daughters. For I will pour out their [own] wickedness on them [and not only on the imposters posing as prophets, for the people could not have been deceived without their own consent].

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God utterly despises HIS NAME being used to spread lies, and deceit, and warns us through Paul that this would be the case as the centuries rolled along from the time frame our Savior came in full flesh as God on earth to die for our wretched state of being... Granting us grace, and mercy as well as the opportunity to be defined concerning God's definition of salvation... While guiding us to work out the greatest GIFT of HIMSELF being the LIFE, so as to be at ONE with HIM in every WAY... Again, this entails ensuring we are proving all things through HIS WORD, and the SPIRITUAL guidance that our Savior, the TEACHER, will grant us if in faith we rely upon HIS SPIRIT to work out the priceless HOPE of salvation through HIMSELF...

Paul reminds us that it does no one any good to believe lies... Remaining spiritually sober through the Lord Jesus Christ helps us to prepare for what God's Word declares will come, and of course means has to be fulfilled... Deceit, and the belief of such manipulation, only will lead to disillusionment, and despair... Leading those defined by such a spiritual state to seek solutions outside of what is truly the ONLY SOLUTION which is the TRUTH defined by the LAMB OF GOD... As Paul instructs us through the 2nd letter written to Timothy chapter 4:

"4 I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: <sup>2</sup> preach the word [as an official messenger]; be ready when the time is right and *even* when it is not [keep your sense of urgency, whether the opportunity seems favorable or unfavorable, whether convenient or inconvenient, whether welcome or unwelcome]; correct [those who err in doctrine or behavior], warn [those who sin], exhort *and* encourage [those who are growing toward spiritual maturity], with inexhaustible patience and [faithful] teaching.

<sup>3</sup> For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine *and* accurate instruction [that challenges them with God's truth]; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled [with something pleasing], they will accumulate for themselves [many] teachers [one after another, chosen] to satisfy their own desires *and* to support the errors they hold, <sup>4</sup> and will turn their ears away from the truth and will wander off into myths *and* man-made fictions [and will accept the unacceptable]."

Breaking, or the changing of what God has considered right, and good from even before the foundations of the world were created will eventually lead to a state of being that will have one diametrically opposed to our Savior Himself... His commandments are to be revered because they are the Word of God, and the Word is God... Life eternal through the very Word, while written on our hearts, and minds, will help us to endure to the end... Our God is faithful...

It is ourselves that must choose to believe the very WORD of LIFE the LORD JESUS CHRIST defines as just, and the very TRUTH HE defines through HIS calling via the Holy Spirit... Holding fast does take self-control, patience, and discipline to trust, and rely upon HIS HOLY SPIRIT... To ensure we work out this redemption of grace through the very WORD of TRUTH as God instructs us through Paul in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5:

"<sup>19</sup> Do not quench [subdue, or be unresponsive to the working and guidance of] the [Holy] Spirit. <sup>20</sup> Do not scorn *or* reject gifts of prophecy *or* prophecies [spoken revelations—words of instruction or exhortation or warning]. <sup>21</sup> But test all things carefully [so you can recognize what is good]. Hold firmly to that which is good. <sup>22</sup> Abstain from every form of evil [withdraw and keep away from it]. <sup>23</sup> Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you through and through [that is, separate you from profane and vulgar things, make you pure and whole and undamaged—consecrated to Him—set apart for His purpose]; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept complete and [be found] blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup> Faithful *and* absolutely trustworthy is He who is calling you [to Himself for your salvation], and He will do it [He will fulfill His call by making you holy, guarding you, watching over you, and protecting you as His own]."

Jesus is the Tree of LIFE... God will help us to endure the wrath of Satan as this fallen one will indeed use those who have fallen for his spiritual seductions through the love for sin, to persecute, and put to death the saints of God... Blessed are those who are granted the strength to endure what is ultimately their anger towards God, and still love one's enemies because of understanding those who are deceived by the devil in reality, "no not what they do..."

Vengeance is God's ultimately... There will be NO deliverance, nor spiritual strength through the love of God, for those who will have to incur the wrath of their Creator when the times come for HIM to avenge the suffering of the saints... Partake of HIM daily in order to fulfill the will of our Father in heaven as we prepare for eternity spent with our Everliving, and Most Righteous God... Blessings, and remember in order to remain holy in GOD our SAVIOR we must keep HIS WORD faithfully in accordance to HIS sovereign will...

## The Feast of the Nativity (Copyright) by James McBride (United Kingdom)

**An intensely spiritual observance? A secular holiday? A pagan festival? Here's some light on the celebration of the birth of Jesus**

Christmastime has etched itself into our calendar. For some it's an intensely religious experience. To others a welcome mid-winter break. And an opportunity, for some, for a good knees-up! Overall, it has become an almost universal festival observed even by non-Christians.

Most 21st century Western Christians, however, realize that the trappings of Christmas are transferred from ancient pre-Christian worship. It's common knowledge in our skeptical age. Whether it's the tree, or "the holly and the ivy" or the trinkets inside the pudding, or the over-indulgence in food and alcohol, or even the cheery "Merry Christmas" - all are in direct descent from pre-Christian practice.

How on earth could such elements have been grafted onto the pure religion of Jesus Christ? Those who oppose the celebration of Christmas point to the medieval compromises of the Church: bring the heathen into the church by Christianizing their pagan customs. Make it easy for them to convert. And multitudes did.

It's certainly an important reason. But is it sufficient to account for the universal distortion of this much celebrated of festivals? Could there be some hidden grain of truth around which gathered the mythical pagan practices?

It's a recognized historical fact, confirmed by all treatises on the matter, that the early Christians did not have Christmas celebrations in late December. It entered the calendar only around the 5th century. But does this mean that there was no recognition of this momentous event? Could the "becoming flesh" of the Creator God go unnoticed, uncelebrated? Of course not!

### **Nativity Festival**

In fact, the time of the birth of Jesus Christ was a festival observed, in anticipation, possibly from the beginning of human existence!

Notice what the noted author John Brady had to say back in 1815. Having explained that the Roman calendar calculations were seriously adrift in the time of Christ, he writes: Hence arose the inaccuracy, which has been so often and so pathetically lamented, in keeping the day of our Lord's Nativity; which it is now settled, by arguments incontrovertible, did not take place on the 25th of December, but at the time the Jews kept their Feast of Tabernacles [*Clavis Calendria*, v.2, pp. 340-341]

The scholarly Dr Bullinger confirms this: "Without the shadow of a doubt... [the Saviour's] birth took place on the 15th Ethanim [or Tishri - the first day of the Festival of Tabernacles]" (*Companion Bible*, Appdx. 179).

You will find an exposition of this ancient Festival (as observed in Israel) in Leviticus 23. It was one of the three annual harvest festivals celebrated throughout the ancient world, and very likely instituted by the Creator in the time of Adam.

### **Foretold In The Stars**

The birth of a future Saviour was announced to man even before he was ejected from the Garden of Eden because of his sin! Notice Genesis 3:15-16: "*I [God] will put enmity between you [Satan] and the woman; also between your offspring and her offspring; he will bruise your head and you will bruise his heel*". A human descendant of Eve ("*born of a woman*") would be injured by Satan. But ultimately would be the Victor.

That offspring was Jesus, the longed-for Messiah, the "*desire of all nations*". He was temporarily "*bruised*" in his death. But he rose triumphantly from the grave to conquer and destroy (yet future) the Devil! The birth of a Saviour was in the mind and plan of God before even the foundation of the world!

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Indeed the very configuration of the planets was arranged with this in mind. During the week of re-creation, God said "*Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years*" (Genesis 1:14).

Let's look more closely at that statement. The "... *seasons [Heb moed]*" is the very word used to describe the festivals listed in Leviticus 23, including, for example, the Festival of Tabernacles. Written into the very fabric of the heavens is the magnificent plan of God for a Deliverer to come to mankind!

Truly "*The heavens declare the glory of God!*" As the psalmist continues: "*Day after day pours forth speech, and night after night declares knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Yet their line [voice - LXX] goes out through all the earth, their words to the ends of the world*" (Psalm 19:1-4).

We are here told that although the heavens are silent - yet they carry an eloquent message to discerning man. Included in that message of the stars, and transcribed into the annual round of agricultural festivals, is God's plan for a Saviour of mankind! It is God's unwritten *torah* [instruction] (vv. 7-9).

### **An Unlikely Story**

But as John Brady states, and as confirmed by numerous others, December 25 is perhaps the most unlikely time for the birth of Jesus!

Given the Palestinian climate which dictated agricultural practice, no sheep are likely to have been out on the hills at that inclement time of year. Nor would the authorities impose a census in mid-winter. Nor was a young full-term woman likely to tackle a ninety-mile journey through wild hill country.

That very time of year, however, did have great significance for the majority of society of that era. Again, the heavens had a part! For towards the end of December the sun reached its lowest point, and visibly began once again to climb daily higher in the sky. The cycle of nature was being renewed! A time for celebration indeed.

And what better time for the Sun of Righteousness (Malachi 4:2) to first become flesh - as a fertilized ovum in the womb of His mother Mary!

It is also significant that nine months later as the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6), Jesus visibly entered our world - as a baby - in the very Festival, the Festival of Tabernacles, which portrays the future reign of the Messiah over a world at total peace!

### **God With Us**

Follow this. Since Jesus was born at the Feast of Tabernacles - which was always in September/October - when would He have first become flesh? John tells us that "*The Word became flesh*" (John 1:14). Human gestation the time from conception to birth - is about forty weeks. Jesus gave up his heavenly status as a part of the divine Family to become flesh - '*Immanuel, God with us*' (Matthew 1:23). He took on human life as a male sperm cell, at that moment prior to conception becoming human flesh. Nine months later, at the beginning of the Festival of Tabernacles (late September) Jesus was born in Bethlehem, near Jerusalem.

John completed his sentence: "...*the Word became flesh* [at the latter part of December] ... *and dwelt* [Gk = tabernacled]" *among us*" (ch 1:14). Two separate events - conception, and birth.

Clearly, it would be impossible to be specific about the time of conception. Who could prove it! How could the specific day be pinned down for observance! For example, over the past ten years the conception of Jesus (working on the assumption of forty weeks gestation leading to the first day of Tabernacles) fell on the same day only twice. It varied from December 17 to January 11 on our present calendar. And never once on December 25!

### **Observed Today!**

But the birth of a child is obvious to all - and a time for celebration. Especially, the birth of the Son of God is certainly a time for the greatest rejoicing, in company with all the heavenly angels. The pagan Saturnalia feast, now called Christmas, serves to befoul the beautiful plan of God, and to obscure the most momentous event in history - the Word of

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God becoming flesh (in His human conception) at that time of year. And nine months later, at the Festival of Tabernacles, his birth as the Saviour of mankind (Luke 2:8-14).

The Church of God has long observed this festival. Indeed, it was observed annually by the apostolic church. Notes John Brady: "The first Christians...on the day of the Feast of Tabernacles ornamented their churches [i.e., long after the era of the apostles - there were no "churches" as such for many decades after their death!] with green boughs, as a memorial that Christ was actually born at that time" [*Clavis Calendria*, v.2, p.341].

In fact, this is how ancient Israel **observed** this Festival some fifteen hundred years before the time of Jesus (Leviticus 23:40)! This body of research is today studiously avoided by most church leaders!

#### **Modern Saturnalia**

The apostle Peter may have had the Roman Saturnalia - the pagan feast at the same time as the modern Christmas - in mind when he wrote: "*Let the time that is past suffice for doing what the Gentiles like to do, living in licentiousness, passions, drunkenness, revels, carousing and lawless idolatry. They are surprised that you do not now join them in the same wild profligacy, and they abuse you*" (I Peter 3:3-4).

Christians avoided those celebrations. But what an excellent portrait of modern Christmas celebrations! And of the abuse meted especially to Christians who refuse to "join in" the dissolute festivities!

Many dedicated Christians, of course, avoid the excesses of the Christmas season. They quietly celebrate it as the birthday of Jesus. How much more satisfying, more authentic, to note this vital historical moment in the way God prescribed, and at the time He appointed.

#### **Peace On Earth**

God has given the perfect time to honour the birth of His Son into our world - at the Festival which He long ago appointed for His people. But like ancient King Jeroboam (I Kings 12:32), Christians have shifted the observance to an inappropriate time of year.

The Festival of Tabernacles, however, celebrates what Christians daily pray for - the fulfilment of the Kingdom of God on earth. A time of "*peace on earth among men in whom he is well pleased*". It was the beautiful song of the heavenly angelic host who announced the birth of the Saviour (Luke 2:14) on that quiet early autumn night in ancient Judaea!

That longed-for era is coming! Let's not "*learn the way of the heathen...*" (Jeremiah 10:2) by keeping "*the [feast] days of Baa!*". Let's keep the Feast (of Tabernacles) in celebration of that momentous event - the nativity of mankind's one and only Saviour.

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## **Human Sacrifice and Yeshua**

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The question has been asked by some Jewish (and Gentile) people, 'How can Yeshua be a sacrifice for sin when God comes against human sacrifice in the Law of Moses?' This is usually supported by references to Scripture passages like these:

"And you must not let any of your sons pass through the fire to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am Yahveh!" (Leviticus 18:21)

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“Then Yahveh spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Again, you shall say to the Sons of Israel: ‘Whoever of the Sons of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell in Israel, who gives any of his sons to Molech, he must surely be put to death! The people of the land shall stone him with stones. I will set My face against that man and will cut him off from his people because he has given some of his sons to Molech to defile My Sanctuary and profane My holy name. If the people of the land should in any way hide their eyes from the man when he gives some of his sons to Molech and they do not kill him, then I will set My face against that man and against his family and I will cut him off from his people, and all who prostitute themselves with him to commit harlotry with Molech.’” (Lev. 20:1-5)

The putting of one’s son ‘through the fire’ to Molech is a euphemism for sacrificing a son to the fire god Molech (one of many names for Satan in paganism, who required the sacrifice of infants). It’s very clear that God doesn’t want us sacrificing our sons to Molech, so how can God the Father sacrifice His own Son for us? Wouldn’t He be sinning by going against His very word on the subject?

### **God’s Understanding of Mosaic Law**

When Yeshua was accosted by the Sadducees, who questioned Him about ‘whose wife will she be in Heaven’ if she had had seven husbands and no children by any of them, Yeshua pointedly told them that they didn’t know the Word of God, nor the power of God because in the new Heavens there will be no marrying like here on Earth (Mt. 22:23-33). Yeshua came against their belief that there was no resurrection by speaking of the Burning Bush and the encounter that Moses had with Yahveh (Ex. 3:1-6f.). Yeshua said that God was the God of the living, not the dead, meaning that all that seem dead to us are alive unto God.

When Yeshua was hypocritically questioned by the Pharisees about, ‘if a man could divorce his wife for any’ infraction (of uncleanness; Dt. 24:1-4), Yeshua asked them what it said in Torah (the Law of Moses). They replied that Moses had given them the ability, but Yeshua said it was only given to them because of their hard hearts. Divorce wasn’t ‘in the Beginning’ when God created Adam and Eve (Mt. 19:3-9). Herein lies the reality that all of Torah, not just what we think are the laws and statutes, etc., can be, and are, used by God the Son to show us something that we, just like the Pharisees and Sadducees before us, wouldn’t have seen without Messiah Yeshua pointing it out to us. This concept applies to the Father being able to sacrifice His Son Yeshua.

When God tested Father Abraham by asking him to sacrifice his uniquely begotten son Isaac, the sacrifice of Isaac was halted by Yeshua (the so-called Angel of the Lord) and a substitute was made for Isaac with a ram-lamb (a lamb)! This event was a perfect picture of God the Father sacrificing His Son, the Lamb of God, for us. This understanding might not convince a Jewish person who hates Yeshua, but hopefully, it’ll persuade believers as to how God could sacrifice His Son for us, in spite of what is written in Lev. 20 because in this case, Genesis 22, which is also Torah, overrides Lev. 20, just as the prohibition against work on the Sabbath (Ex. 20:8-11; 31:12-17) is overridden when a Jewish baby boy, 8 days old, needs to be circumcised (Gen. 17:10-14), which is work, on the Sabbath day (John 7:21-24). The sacrifice of God’s Son was God’s divine idea from the Beginning, of how the Father could reveal His love for His other Son—Israel.

Also, ‘inherent’ in the Passover sacrifice of the lamb(s) in Egypt, because it was a covenantal sacrifice, were all the Mosaic sacrifices, therefore, the two types of sin sacrifice found in Mosaic Law are there (in the Passover sacrifice), as well as the three other major types of sacrifice. Inherent in the New Covenant sacrifice of Yeshua as the Lamb of God are all the concepts of sacrifice that we find in the Mosaic sacrifices, two being, of course, the sacrifices for intentional and unintentional sins. So, yes, the sacrifice of Yeshua does take away our sins and cleanses us so that the Godhead can dwell within us (John 14:23), just as Yahveh could dwell in the midst of Israel in the Tabernacle of Moses.

### **Atonement and the Ark of the Covenant**

From another perspective, the Mosaic sacrifices picture the sacrifice of Messiah Yeshua. Although the animals were offered up on the bronze Altar of Sacrifice, and Yeshua wasn’t, it seems that His place of crucifixion was directly over where the Ark of the Covenant had been hidden in the days before the King of Babylon destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple and took a number of artifacts from the Temple to Babylon. In the list of articles taken the Ark isn’t mentioned (Jer. 52:17-23; Ezra 1:7-11).

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When Yeshua died it seems that the earthquake (Mt. 27:54) opened a fissure down to the cave where the Ark had been hidden, and when the soldier pierced Yeshua’s side (Jn. 19:34), some of the blood and water found its way to the Ark’s lid.

Only on the Day of Atonement was the High Priest of Israel to go into the Holy of Holies, where the Ark of the Covenant was, and sprinkle the lid (commonly called the Mercy Seat) seven times with the blood of the goat, and then the ground before the Ark seven times (Lev. 16:1f.). The blood of the goat is seen as providing atonement between God and Israel, God being represented by the gold lid, and Israel, by the the ground, from which Man was made.

No other sacrificial blood was ever brought into the Holy of Holies and placed on the Ark’s lid, except for the blood of the bull that was first sacrificed by Aaron for him and his family, so that their sins could be atoned for so that he could then act as a sinless mediator (Lev. 16:1-6). The blood of Messiah Yeshua actually fell upon the lid of Ark of the Covenant.

**Conclusion**

Although God forbids the sacrificing of Israel’s sons to Molech, the sacrifice of the Father’s Son for the eternal atonement and transformation of Israel into the Image of Yeshua is seen in both Father Abraham offering up Isaac, and the Day of Atonement’s goat sacrifice. Sacrifice of the Messiah is truly in the Law of Moses, just as ‘no divorce’ for those in His Kingdom, is seen ‘from the Beginning.’

God telling Father Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac is the perfect picture of the Father sacrificing His Son Yeshua, which is why God told Abraham to take his son of promise (for Sarah was barren and couldn’t conceive; hence, Isaac is likened to The Son of Promise—the Messiah), which conceptually allows for the Father to sacrifice Yeshua for our sins and transformation into Yeshua’s Image and Likeness on Judgement Day.

The blood of the goat on the Day of Atonement, brought into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled seven times upon the Ark of the Covenant’s gold lid, and seven times upon the ground in front of the Ark, way reenacted with the crucifixion of Messiah Yeshua. If Ron Wyatt’s findings are true, and there seems to be no valid reason to deny it, the blood of Messiah Yeshua literally fell on the gold lid of the Ark of the Covenant, and the Earth, thereby completing what Leviticus 16 pictured—the eternal atonement for Israel.

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**Articles – A Blast from the Past**  
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**Have a very happy Sabbath!**