



Shabbat Shalom

Winter 2003/2004 / 5764

Festivals

Interviews: Lawrence Hoffman Samuel Bacchiocchi

The purpose of this journal is “to promote a climate of respect, understanding and sharing between Jewish and Christian communities; not only for the exercise of love and appreciation of the other, but also for the discovery of truths and values which surpass the genius of both traditions.”

This is the hope dreamed in the name of our journal, SHABBAT SHALOM: hope of reconciliation, hope of SHALOM, inspired and nurtured through a common reflection anchored in the experience of the SHABBAT.

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Shabbat Shalom A Journal of Jewish-Christian Reflection

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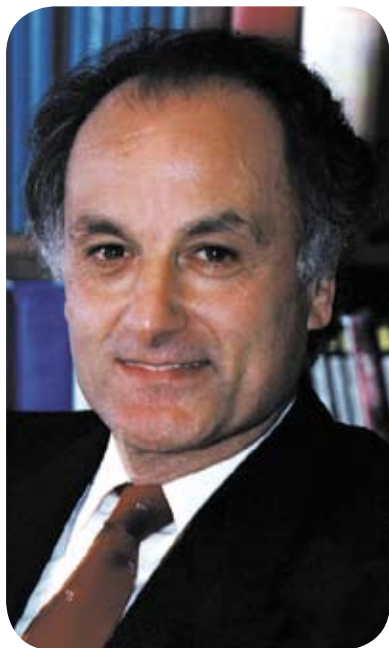
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The Joy: To Remember and Hope



Jacques B. Doukhan, D.H.L., Th.D.

This is a holy time, a special occasion, in which to enjoy celebration. The feasts help us to remember the past miracle of salvation and . . . to hope for the future.

Pessah, to remember the Exodus and to hope for the promised land;

Shavuot, to remember the gift of the first fruits and to hope for the fruit of the garden of Eden;

Kippur, to remember the forgiveness of the Lord and to hope for the universal atonement;

Sukkot, to remember our erring in the wilderness and the shekhinah and to hope for home and the time when the Lord will dwell (*shakhan*) with us;

Purim, to remember our sur-

vival from the first shoah and to hope for the Lord's total victory over evil.

This special issue of *Shabbat Shalom* will take us from our sorrows and trivial concerns and encourage us to laugh, to eat, and to enjoy the presence of the Lord. Jewish festivals teach us that enjoying the gift of life and its promises is a *mitzvah*, a divine commandment to fulfill. In the pages of this journal, guided by a rabbi and a church theologian—two traditional enemies—we will, paradoxically, learn to come together in order to think about the rich and profound meaning of the feasts and, in that coming to together, learn to dream the right dreams.



Lawrence Hoffman



Dr. Hoffman is Professor of Liturgy and Director of the Synagogue 2000 Initiative for synagogue spirituality, Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion and an ordained rabbi. He researches, writes, and lectures in the history of Jewish liturgy, ritual studies, and contemporary worship and modern Jewish spirituality.

Dr. Hoffman was recognized for his contributions to the field of liturgy with the North American Academy of Liturgy's (NAAL's) annual Berakah award. He became the first Jewish president of the interfaith scholarly organization, which is dedicated to liturgical research and dialogue.

Some of Dr. Hoffman's recent scholarly works include: *The Canonization of the Synagogue Service*, Studies in Judaism and Christianity in Antiquity, 4 (Notre Dame, 1986); *Covenant of Blood: Circumcision and Gender in Rabbinic Judaism* (Chicago, 1995); and *Minhag Ami: My People's Prayer Book*, vol. 1, *The Sh'ma and Its Blessing* (Jewish Lights Publishing, 1997). He has also coedited the series *Two Liturgical Traditions* (Notre Dame: 1991-).

S *habbat Shalom:*
**Are Jewish festivals
still relevant today?**

Hoffman: Expressions such as “I’m killing time,” or “I had the time of my life!” betray the human need to structure life by a time line with ups and downs, highs and lows. If that line levels out, we become “dis-spirited”—the way a patient is pronounced dead when vital signs level out on a hospital monitor. Festivals remain relevant because they differentiate the merely “momentary” from the truly “momentous.”

Everyone arranges life with a calendar. The question is, Which one? The holiest day on a corporate calendar might be the annual shareholder meeting, when the firm recollects its modest beginnings compared to current earnings. The Jewish calendar prefers a new year celebrated by wiping clean the slate of sin.

Religious festivals matter also because they have the potential to deepen us as human beings. The capacity for human emotion is learned; it is not innate. There are people, for instance, who love humanity in the abstract; born with reason, they have reasoned their way to the proposition that the world should be saved from tragedy. Yet, ironically enough, they dismiss the pain of individuals—because reason alone cannot develop human empathy. That is where holy days come in; their accompanying rituals instruct us in empathy, and make fully moral behavior possible. Every Yom Hasho'ah, for instance, I cry for nameless others as if they were my own.

Other holy days carry other emotions. I know how to celebrate freedom because at every Passover seder I rehearse the glorious fact that God took me out of Egypt. I experience the reality of sin and the greatness of forgiveness every Yom Kippur. And because I dress up in costume every Purim, I never lose the sense of childhood innocence. Observing Jewish festivals makes me a profoundly deeper human being.

Shabbat Shalom: How should we keep festivals to make them meaningful?

Hoffman: Old rituals are newly reinterpreted; or old interpretations are given new rituals. Both processes may occur, but under different circumstances. In charismatic or hierarchical systems of authority, change comes from above: a Hasidic rebbe, say, announces a new practice, and people do it. But overall, Judaism has favored neither charisma nor hierarchy, so changes tend to occur from the bottom up—a community initiates

a practice and others emulate it until it becomes common custom. Meaningfulness, then, requires a given community's willingness to take responsibility for its own religious practice. Local rabbis, who constitute on-site religious leadership, become very important in the process.

The Jewish system of local adaptation and trust in the public

“Religious festivals matter also because they have the potential to deepen us as human beings.”

leads arch-conservatives to reject all innovations just because they are innovations, thereby killing the very festivals they want to protect. Alternatively, ardent innovators who want to retain festivals at all costs may end up pandering to the public—like my child-centered culture here in America, which repackages deeply religious practices as pediatric kiddie-events. We also run the risk of commercialization—such as rampant Hanukkah gift-giving at the expense of its symbolism of light. So we need both courage and caution: courage to welcome contemporary cultural expression into our rituals; but caution enough to do so with care.

I also think (admittedly controversially) that some festivals necessarily fall into at-least-temporary abeyance. Take, for example, *Tisha B'av* (the Ninth day of the Hebrew month of Av), which is traditionally a day of mourning for the destruction of the Temple. For many modern Jews who do not regret the passing of animal sacrifice, a century and

a half of attempted interpretation has failed. *Tisha B'av* may be successfully recovered some day, but until a new interpretation proves compelling, I do not lament its eclipse.

Shabbat Shalom: What is the most important festival in the Jewish yearly cycle?

Hoffman: Festival significance varies with time. Think of the Jewish year as an ellipse with two foci, Passover (in the spring) and the High Holy Days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (in the fall). The former is particularistic: it affirms the formative event in Jewish peoplehood. The latter is universal: it celebrates creation and calls for moral renewal. Biblically, however, Rosh Hashanah was relatively insignificant, and Passover was just one of three pilgrimage festivals. I think also of a famous Jacob Riis photograph from the 1880s, picturing an immigrant living alone in a miniscule underground coal cellar. He sits proudly at a tiny makeshift table, dressed in a suit to welcome Shabbat. This man who worked ceaselessly all week long may have found Shabbat most important.

So your question should be reformulated as, “Important to whom?” or (the same thing), “Whose opinion wins?” Religious authorities determine “official meanings”: the technically correct answers. But again, in Judaism, the experience of everyday people usually proves probative. Ordinary folk posit “public meanings” that persist regardless of what experts say. Rabbis would universally choose Shabbat over Hanukkah, for instance, but most people today think differently. Rabbis and the people struggle to arrive at common understandings, hop-

ing God is patient with us both.

Shabbat Shalom: What do you think about Christians observing Jewish festivals?

Hoffman: Suppose we conceptualize time the way we do space. We reserve certain spaces as our homes, and decorate them to express our values—books on the wall, perhaps, instead of stuffed animal-heads. Festivals are to time what homes are to space—times, rather than spaces, that we call our own and outfit similarly.

Now the key word in your question is “observing.” Asking (about time) whether Christians should “observe” Jewish festivals is like inquiring (about space) whether Christians should “occupy” Jewish homes, and the answer in both cases is No. But Jews happily open their homes and their sacred moments for visitors. So change “observe” to “visit.” I share my spatial and my temporal homes with reverential *visitors*. I like to visit Christians similarly.

Most at stake is Passover, when many Christians want to celebrate a *seder* as they believe Jesus did. Christians certainly have the right to observe the Thursday of Holy Week in a manner consonant with their understanding of Christian Scripture. But any *seder* Jesus had could hardly have looked like my own, which evolved only during the many centuries after Jesus died. I would object to Christians who “observe” *that seder* as their own. Christians should live their sacred story in authentically Christian ways, but should not (even inadvertently) coopt the festive celebration of my own Jewish story for Christian purposes.

Press the analogy with space a little further. Suppose I invited you to my home for a social gathering. You would, no doubt,

honor my home rules—sitting on my sofa, say, but not retiring to my bedroom. So too, Christian guests at my *seder* arrive with full knowledge that they are visiting my home “time,” not theirs. They will quite properly see Christological significance in my *seder*—like the way my spatial home might remind them of the way they built their own. But they should not take over what I do as if it is theirs, not mine.

Shabbat Shalom: How do Jewish and Christian festivals differ (psychologically and theologically)?

Hoffman: Our festival theologies are remarkably similar. We both celebrate covenants with God—through Torah, for Jews; through Christ, for Christians.

“We Jews have many failures; amnesia is not among them.”

We both anticipate an eschaton, promise deliverance from death, and use similar symbols—bread and wine, for example. In both cases, festivals celebrate a sacred story: for Christians, Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection; for Jews, the Exodus, Sinai, and the Land of Israel.

But some Jewish festivals are not self-evidently linked to the Jewish story, even though they are commanded in the Torah—Yom Kippur, for instance. The Jewish calendar is, therefore, more diffuse. The most important Christian festivals superimpose upon each other the single theological theme of the Christ event—even the Christian Sabbath is the *Lord’s Day*. So they achieve a singular focus more than

Jewish festivals do. What Jews lack in focus, however, we gain in breadth. Yom Kippur is personal; Passover communal. Our calendar is solar, but also lunar. Our holidays more easily evolve with time—Israel Independence Day and Yom Hasho’ah, for instance, easily become religious occasions no less than Hanukkah once did.

Shabbat Shalom: What is the most important lesson in the Jewish festivals? To remember, to enjoy, or to hope?

Hoffman: The Bible commands enjoyment on some occasions, but overall, enjoyment is peripheral, since some holy times are not joyful at all—they are tragic. Memory, however, matters supremely, as it does for Christians. Jewish memory is more historical, however (writer Isaac Bashevis Singer is reputed to have said, “We Jews have many failures; amnesia is not among them”). The Holocaust and the rise of a third Jewish commonwealth in Israel are sacred events in and of themselves, so that Jewish memory expands historically in ways that essential Christian memory does not.

But we both agree on what Christians call *anamnesis* and Jews call *zekher*: memory that is not reducible to ordinary secular recollection. Theological memory is inseparable from hope. We dare to hope only because we choose to remember.

Jewish Festivals in Israel

Jewish Festival	Description
Rosh Hashanah Jewish New Year, Feast of Trumpets	Rosh Hashanah is the great and solemn day of judgment, the first ten days of repentance culminating in Yom Kippur. A psychologically sound practice is to throw small stones into running water to symbolize the throwing away of acknowledged wrongdoings and weaknesses. The running water represents the washing away of those things that have separated us from God and the opportunity for renewal.
Yom Kippur Day of Atonement	The most solemn day of the year, Yom Kippur is a day of fasting and synagogue attendance. Balancing the seriousness of the day, the Torah reading for the day includes the story of the birth of Isaac, whose name means "to laugh." This reminds us that God, in his act of judgment, will remember us.
Sukkot Feast of Tabernacles, Feast of Ingathering	One of the three pilgrimage feasts, Sukkot takes its name from the makeshift shelters erected and lived in a few days before the festival begins. The original connection with the land and its produce is still strong. Many are seen carrying <i>lulav</i> , bundles of the four species of plants which are harvested during this time.
Simchat Torah Joy of the Torah	This festival marks the end of the Holy Day period that began with Rosh Hashanah. On this day, the Torah scrolls are taken out of the synagogues, held protectively in the arms and accompanied by dancing, singing companions to special services. The final portion of Torah is read and the giving of Torah to God's people through Moses is celebrated.
Hanukkah Feast of Lights	Although Hanukkah is not a religious festival per se, it is celebrated with enthusiasm in remembrance of the Maccabbean revolt, during which time the oil for the lighting of the Temple did not run out for eight days. Had the revolt failed, the Jewish people would not have survived as a nation.
Purim	Purim commemorates the heroism of Esther in rescuing the Jewish people from the murderous plot of Haman. Purim is a timely reminder that in spite of plots to destroy God's people, relief and deliverance will arise.
Pessah Passover	One of the three pilgrimage feasts, Pessah comes in the spring. During this festival, all products containing leaven are not eaten, for leaven symbolically represents sin. The festival marks the origin of the Jewish people as a free nation, delivered from slavery by God. The people are to remember their deliverance from bondage.
Shavuot Pentecost, Feast of Weeks	One of the three pilgrimage festivals, Shavuot marks the commemoration of the granting of the Torah to Israel. While Pessah is a reminder of Israel's origin as a nation, Shavuot shows the religious nature of the nation. There is a custom of staying up the entire Shavuot night studying Torah. This demonstrates dedication to being "awake" to the importance of Torah, and is evidence of its continuing relevance. With Shavuot, the yearly cycle comes to an end.



Samuele Bacchiocchi



Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi is Professor Emeritus of Theology and Church History at Andrews University. Dr. Bacchiocchi received his doctorate in 1974 from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. His dissertation focused on the Church's change *From Sabbath to Sunday*.

An avid writer and lecturer, Dr. Bacchiocchi travels extensively. His works include *The Advent Hope for Human Hopelessness: A Theological Study of the Meaning of the Second Advent for Today* (1986); *God's Festivals in Scripture and History*, 2 vols. (1995); and *The Christian and Rock Music: A Study on Biblical Principles of Music* (ed., 2000).

S *habbat Shalom:*
Are Jewish festivals still relevant in today's modern life? Why?

Bacchiocchi: Yes, the ancient feasts of Israel are still relevant for us today. Many wrongly assume that the annual feasts came to an end with the sacrifice of the Messiah simply because they were connected with the sacrificial system of the Temple. But the continuity or discontinuity of the feasts is determined not by their connection with the sacrificial system, but by what they symbolize. If the feasts represent only the redemptive accomplishments of the sacrifice of the Messiah, then obviously their function would have terminated at the crucifixion. But, if they also symbolize the consummation of redemption to be accomplished by the Messiah at His second coming, then their function continues

in the Christian community, although with a new meaning and manner of observance.

***Shabbat Shalom:* What was the most important festival in the Jewish yearly cycle?**

Bacchiocchi: Passover was, and is, the most important Jewish festival because it celebrates the liberation of the Jews from Egyptian domination and oppression, which resulted in their national and religious independence. To this day, Jews celebrate Passover as the Feast of Redemption. Even the Sabbath is a reminder that “you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out thence with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm” (Deut 5:15). In a sense, the Sabbath celebrates on a smaller scale the Feast of Redemption, which is celebrated at Passover on a larger scale.

The significance of Passover is reflected in the fact that all other feasts are dated with reference to it: “the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you” (Exod 12:2). Prior to the Egyptian deliverance, the new year began in the autumn. This is why the Feast of Ingathering is said to occur “at the year’s end” (Exod 34:22), although according to the religious calendar it fell on the fifteenth day of the seventh month (Lev 23:34). Thus the Exodus deliverance caused the beginning of the new year to coincide with the month of Passover.

***Shabbat Shalom:* Is there a hierarchy among the festivals? Are some more important than others? What is the most important festival for today?**

Bacchiocchi: Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles were the three pilgrimage feasts in ancient Israel. Each can help us

to appreciate the unfolding of redemptive history. The biblical festivals can enrich personal and church worship by focusing, during the course of the year, on the redemptive accomplishments of Messiah’s first and second comings. We cannot preach the whole Bible in one sermon. We cannot celebrate the whole story of redemption in one Sabbath.

***Shabbat Shalom:* What do you think about Christians observing Jewish festivals?**

Bacchiocchi: A church calendar patterned after the calendar of Israel can help us to do justice to all the important salvific acts of

“...the continuity or discontinuity of the feasts is determined not by their connection with the sacrificial system, but by what they symbolize.”

God. Many pastors go for years without taking their congregation through the central truths of the Christian history of redemption. A church calendar patterned after Israel’s calendar challenges pastors and members to explore more fully these fundamental truths of the plan of salvation, which are reflected in the yearly cycle of festivals.

Following the yearly festal cycle can also serve as a deterrent against the temptation of using the Sabbath religious services to promote various kinds of secular agendas. A church calendar that focuses on the great truths of salvation challenges us to foster worship renewal by seeking for a deeper understanding and expe-

rience of what the Messiah has done, is doing, and will do for us. The celebration of the great saving acts of God commemorated by the annual feasts can bring about worship renewal by making our worship experience God-centered, rather than self-centered.

***Shabbat Shalom:* What is the difference between Jewish festivals (in terms of psychology and theology) and Christian festivals, in your opinion?**

Bacchiocchi: The difference between the Jewish and Christian celebration of the festivals is to be found in the historical and typological meanings attributed to them. For example, the Jewish Passover celebrates the deliverance from Egypt and the future deliverance of the Messiah to come.

The Christian Passover, on the other hand, points to the past suffering and atoning death of Yeshua for all believing sinners (1 Cor 11:26). Through the emblems of the bread and wine, Christians remember and commemorate the death of the Messiah and His suffering in our behalf: “Do this in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19; cf. 1 Cor 11:24). We remember the Messiah as the Paschal Lamb who was sacrificed for us by partaking of the emblems of His broken body and shed blood.

The Christian Passover points to the present benefits of the sacrifice of the Messiah, which are mediated to us in the present. The bread and wine enable us to internalize and appropriate the reality and meaning of this sacrifice. At the Lord’s table, we enter into fellowship with our exalted Lord. Paul describes this fellowship as “a participation in the blood . . . [and] body of Christ” (1 Cor 10:16). Thus the Christian Passover

reaffirms the eternal covenant that God promised to the fathers (Jer 32:40; 50:5; cf. Isa 55:3; Ezek 16:60).

The Christian Passover looks toward the future messianic banquet. This eschatological expectation is expressed in the Gospels by the Messiah's words: "For I tell you I shall not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God" (Luke 22:16). His statement gives us a crucial criterion to determine whether or not Old Testament festivals such as Passover continue beyond the cross. Is their typology ultimately fulfilled at the first coming of the Messiah or at His second coming? In the case of Passover, Yeshua made it clear that the feast will be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. The present observance of Passover nourishes our hope and faith in the future Passover Supper that we will celebrate with Him at His second coming. In Paul's letter to the Corinthians, the eschatological expectation is expressed by the phrase "proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Cor 11:26).

***Shabbat Shalom:* In biblical times, festivals were associated with sacrifices. How does the rest of Scripture (outside of Torah) justify the maintenance of Jewish festivals?**

Bacchiocchi: The continuity or discontinuity of the feasts is determined not by their connection with the sacrificial system, but by the scope of their typology which reaches beyond the sacrifice of the Messiah to the consummation of redemption. For example, the antitypical fulfillment of Pentecost is of fundamental importance to the origin and mission of the Christian church. The first Christian Pentecost is

linked to the Old Testament feast chronologically and typologically because it occurred on the very day of the Jewish feast ("when the day of Pentecost was fully come," Acts 2:1 KJV) as the spiritual harvest of the first fruits of the Messiah's redemption. As with the preceding feasts, Pentecost has several fulfillments.

First, Pentecost celebrates the crowning of Messiah's paschal sacrifice in heaven, which was manifested on earth with the

"The Christian Passover looks toward the future messianic banquet."

outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:32-33)—the first fruit of the spiritual harvest (Rom 8:23; Jas 1:18), procured by His redemptive mission. As during the original Pentecost at Sinai, there was fire, earthquake, and a blast of wind that occurred during the first Christian Pentecost (Acts 2:1-3). As God gave His Ten Commandments at Sinai, He now gave the enabling power of His Spirit to the church.

Second, in relation to the community, Pentecost marks the founding of the Christian community and mission. It represents the initial fulfillment of the prophetic vision of the ingathering of God's people from all the nations to the uplifted temple in Zion and the going forth of the Law to teach all nations (Isa 2:2-3; Mic 4:1-2; cf. John 2:19; 12:32). The missionary outreach of the Christian witnesses, which unites people of different languages and cultures as one body in the Messiah, represents the reversal of the scattering and hostility of the

nations that followed God's judgment at Babel (Gen 11:1-9).

Finally, in relation to the end time, Pentecost typifies the continuation of the mission of the Holy Spirit until the completion of the gospel proclamation (Matt 24:14).

***Shabbat Shalom:* What are your personal experiences and the lessons you have learned from festivals?**

Bacchiocchi: The festivals have helped me to appreciate more fully the unfolding of the plan of salvation—from the redemptive accomplishments of the first coming to the consummation of redemption of the second coming.

In summing up the typology of the spring feasts, we can say that they reveal both a theological and an existential progression. Theologically, Passover can be characterized as redemption, the Feast of Unleavened Bread as regeneration, and Pentecost as empowering.

Existentially, Passover invites us to accept the forgiveness provided us by God through the Paschal Lamb (1 Cor 5:7); the Feast of Unleavened Bread summons us to experience the cleansing from sin resulting from God's forgiveness; Pentecost calls us to become receptive to the work of the Holy Spirit.

The progression is evident. The forgiveness typified by Passover makes it possible for us to experience the cleansing represented by the Feast of Unleavened Bread. These in turn enable us to become receptive and responsive to the work of the Holy Spirit, typified by Pentecost.

Celebrating Rosh Hashanah with Food

Food is an important part of the celebration of Jewish festivals. Not only does the preparation and serving of specially prepared dishes bring people together in communion, but the different types of fruits, vegetables, and meats consumed during the festivals serve as symbols. For instance, during the celebration of Rosh Hashanah, apples are dipped in honey or sugar to signify our wish for a sweet new year. In addition, dates are eaten as we petition HaShem to allow our enemies to be consumed. A delicious way to make a wish for a peaceful, prosperous, and sweet new year tangible is to try our honey-glazed, apple-date bread recipe. Served fresh from the oven, it is sure to sweeten your new year celebrations.

Honey-Glazed, Apple-Date Bread

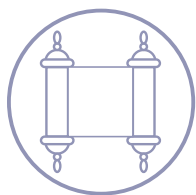
Bread Mixture	
2 Cups Flour	2 Apples: 1 Diced; 1 Cored and Thinly Sliced
1 Teaspoon Salt	4 Teaspoons Baking-Powder
2 Tablespoons Brown Sugar	4 Tablespoons Shortening
3/4 Cup Milk	1 Cup Pitted and Chopped Dates
1 Teaspoon Cinnamon; 1 Tablespoon Brown Sugar	1 Egg, Well Beaten
2 Tablespoons Melted Butter or Margarine	1 Cup Chopped Pecans
Honey Glaze	
1/4 Cup Butter or Margarine	1/4 Cup Light Honey
1/2 Cup Instant Milk Powder	Pinch of Salt
1 Teaspoon Vanilla Extract or Grated Citrus Fruit Rind	Milk for Thinning (Optional)

Bread

Sift flour, measure, and sift with baking-powder, salt, and sugar. Cut in shortening and add dates. Add sufficient milk to which egg has been added to make a stiff dough. Fold in diced apples and pecans. Mix thoroughly. Pour into well-oiled shallow pan. Brush dough with melted butter or margarine. Arrange sliced apples in row in the dough. Brush apples with more melted butter or margarine and sprinkle with cinnamon and brown sugar which have been mixed together. Bake at 400°F for 20 minutes or until apples are tender. Cool on racks, then glaze.

Honey Glaze

In a food processor or blender, mix all ingredients until smooth. Thin the mixture with a little milk if it is too thick to spread.



Hebrew Scriptures

Sukkot, or the Hope of Jerusalem: Reading Jewish Festivals into the Apocalypse*

Jacques B. Doukhan

The Mishnah tells the story of four famous sages who entered the *Pardes*, the mystical paradise of the apocalyptic vision.¹ No one survived the visit, however. The first died right away, the second lost his faith, and the third became demented. As for the fourth . . . , he proclaimed himself the Messiah.

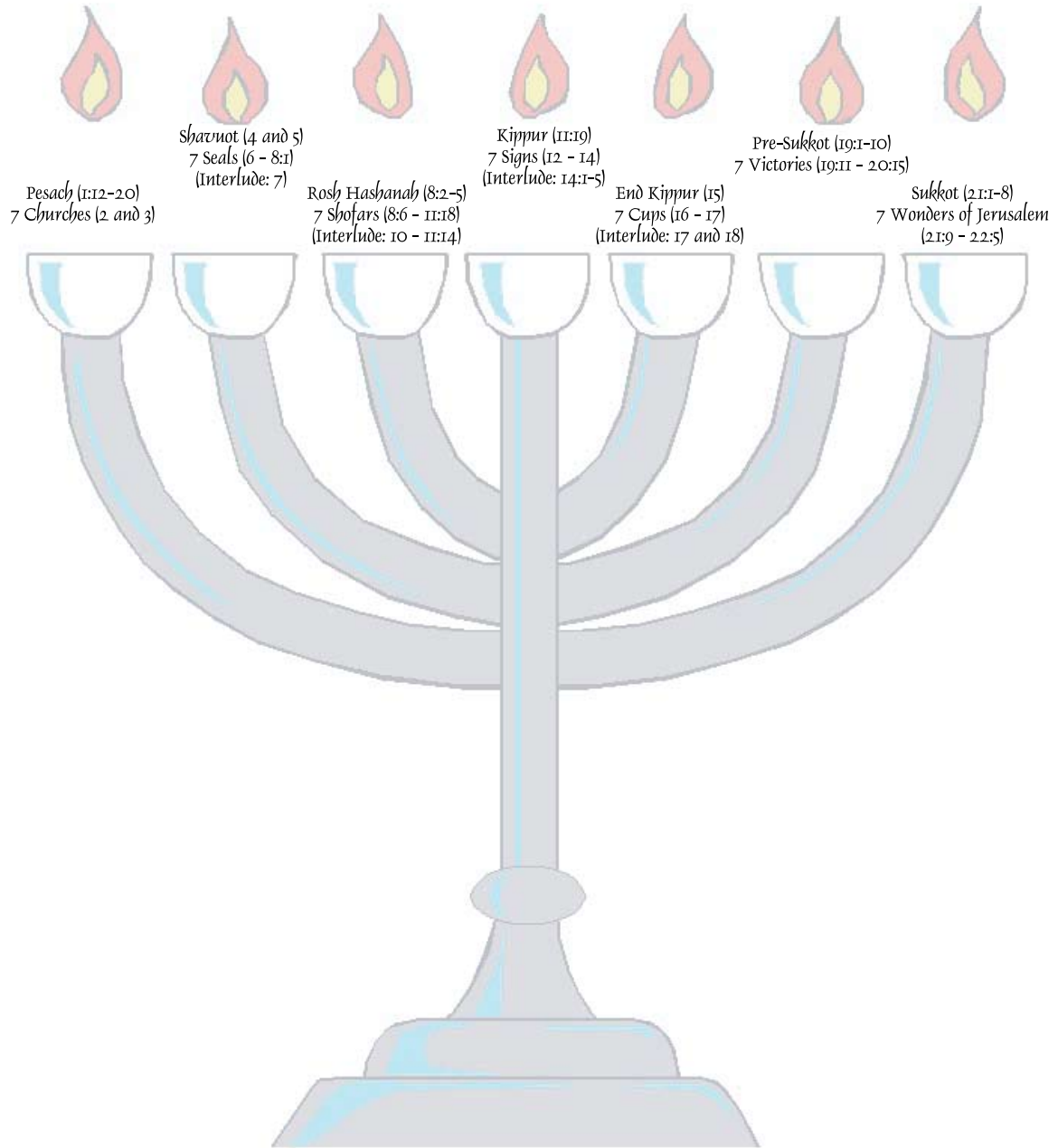
This parable brings us—with a smile—an important warning: the concept of the apocalypse is, indeed, a dangerous one. It has an aura of death, doom, and fear about it. Thus, before we venture into the biblical book of the Apocalypse, we need, therefore, to prepare ourselves and make sure that we will read it and

understand it the way God meant it to be.

The Apocalypse is more Hebrew than any other book of the New Testament. It contains more than 2,000 allusions to the Hebrew Scriptures, including 400 explicit references and 90 literal citations of the Pentateuch and the Prophets. With regard to textual citations, the Apocalypse is more faithful to the original Hebrew than to its Greek translation, the Septuagint. Ernest Renan observed that “the language of the Apocalypse is traced from the Hebrew, thought in Hebrew, and can hardly be understood by those who do not know Hebrew.”² This characteristic invites us to consider the book’s Hebrew background and perspective.

The structure of the Apocalypse, what I call the *menorah* or sevenfold pattern, supports the whole book (see the Menorah table³). The book unwinds in seven cycles of visions, parallel and simultaneous, not unlike the book of Daniel.⁴ At the beginning of each of the seven cycles the vision returns to the Temple with a liturgical note that alludes to the calendar of Israel’s high holy days (as prescribed by Lev 23). The book thus places each prophetic cycle within the perspective of a Jewish festival, one often alluded to within the cycle itself. The author invites us to read the Apocalypse in the light of the Jewish festivals,⁵ rituals that shed symbolic meaning on history.

* The following is an excerpt from Jacques Doukhan’s *Secrets of Revelation* (Hagerstown, MD, Review and Herald, 2002).



The promise of the New Jerusalem concludes the Apocalypse. In this article, we shall explore this phenomenon in relation to the seventh vision of the Apocalypse in which the author sees the end, the vision of the New Jerusalem, when God is at last with us. At this juncture, significantly, the author thinks about Sukkot, the Feast of Tabernacles.



The Dwelling of God

The book of Revelation employs language similar to that used in the context of Sukkot—the Feast of Tabernacles, which is the last in the Jewish calendar—thus associating the New Jerusalem with the festival. A key passage in this regard is: “And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Now the dwelling [or tabernacle] of God is with men, and he will live [or dwell] with them’” (Rev 21:3).

The word “dwelling” or “tabernacle” translates the Greek word *skene*. The Greek word echoes the Hebrew word *shekinah*, the physical sign of God’s presence among His people (Exod 40:34-38). Also, the *shekinah* derives from the same root as the Hebrew verb *shakan* (“to dwell”), rendered by the Greek *skenoun* (“to dwell, to spread the tent”). Such background suggests that Rev 21:3 is emphasizing that God will actually be with humanity.

The New Jerusalem will be God’s actual presence and not

simply a symbol of that presence, as was the case with the Temple. Later, the text is even more explicit: “I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple” (Rev 21:22). Here is the principal difference between the new Jerusalem and the old. In the new city, God’s literal presence replaces the Temple, which had functioned as the symbol of His dwelling. The book of Ezekiel follows the same pattern, concluding likewise with God’s presence in the city: “And the name of the city from that time on will be: the Lord is there” (Ezek 48:35).

God is finally here. True communion between Him and His people is at last possible. The Apocalypse expresses this in the language of the covenant: “They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God” (Rev 21:3). “I will be his God and he will be my Son” (Rev 21:7).⁶ It is one of the favorite themes of the Song of Songs: “My Lover is mine and I am his” (Song 2:16; cf. 6:3; 7:10).

Both the conjugal metaphor and that of the father testify to the proximity of a God with whom it is at last possible to have a direct and reciprocal relationship without the problems of distance, sin, and error, and without the

that we live with, with whom we converse, laugh, eat, and think. It is a new experience that we cannot express in either words or thought.

The Experience of Sukkot

The physical presence of God as the Temple of the New Jerusalem infinitely magnifies that of the Feast of Tabernacles, which owes its name (*sukkot*, tabernacles) to the makeshift dwellings from branches and vines that the people built for the celebration. The custom commemorated Israel’s wandering in the desert and God’s presence among His people: “Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell [*shakan*] among them” (Exod 25:8).

In Jewish tradition, the *sukkah*, like the sanctuary, symbolized the *shekinah*.⁷ The psalms read in the *sukkah* testify to such symbolism—they all speak of God’s protective presence (Pss 23, 27, 36, 57, 63, 91). Furthermore, the fragile nature of the *sukkah* recalls the precariousness of the world’s cities, while it strengthens the longing for the heavenly kingdom. The branches of the roof must always retain open space, so that we may see the heavens through the holes. Significantly, the liturgical readings of the

*God will be there—physically present—like the man
or woman that we live with,
with whom we converse, laugh, eat, and think.*

intervention of a priest or a ritual. What God had to refuse to Moses (Exod 33:20-23) now becomes an everyday occurrence: “They will see his face” (Rev 22:4).

God will be there—physically present—like the man or woman

Feast of Tabernacles cover the book of Ecclesiastes, in which everything—our lives, our deeds, our dwellings—is vanity (see esp. Eccl. 2:4ff.). We find the same lesson of hope inscribed in the other name for the festival—the

“Feast of Ingathering” (Exod 23:16; 34:22)—for it also marked the end of the harvest.

In the Apocalypse, the allusion to the Feast of Tabernacles is particularly appropriate. After Kippur (Rev 11:19), the harvest of grain and grapes (Rev 14:14-20; 16:17, 18), the rite of Azazel (Rev 20:2, 3), and the purification of the camp from evil (Rev 20:7-15)—after these things follows the great gathering of God’s people from the four corners of the earth. We see the universality of the assembly hinted at in the general expression: “The dwelling of God is with men” (Rev 21:3). The prophet Zechariah had already

The people greeted his return by singing: “With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation” (Isa 12:3).⁸ It was the custom Yeshua alluded to during the Feast of Tabernacles when He said: “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink” (John 7:37).

The Meaning of Jerusalem

The Apocalypse gives the fulfillment of all hopes, the answer to all the longings of the world, the quenching of all thirst (Rev 21:6), the descent of the city of God, as a final point: “It is done” (v. 6). And indeed, the city’s name—Jerusalem—is laden with meaning. First and foremost, it is the

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Through these memories, the people of Israel came to identify Jerusalem with God’s presence. The city stood for God’s dwelling place in heaven, the place where the saints could shelter resplendent in God’s inconceivable glory (Ps 48:1-3).

The prophet Daniel also envisioned the heavenly Jerusalem. Beyond the earthly kingdoms that finally disappear without a trace (Dan 2:35), the prophet sees “a kingdom that will never be destroyed” (v. 44) in the shape of a mountain (vv. 35, 45), the traditional symbol of Zion, or Jerusalem.¹⁰

In the spirit of the biblical tradition, Jewish tradition affirms the reality of the “Jerusalem of above” (*Yerushalayim shel Maalah*) that existed even before the creation of the world¹¹ and inspired the poets of love.¹² Jewish apocalyptic literature views the heavenly Jerusalem and its Temple as coming down onto the cities of the world, “for no human work may compare to the dwelling place of the Most-High.”¹³ According to the Kabbalistic rabbi Bahya b. Asher, the plural form of the Hebrew word for Jerusalem (*Yerushalayim*) alludes to the existence of two Jerusalems, one on the earth and the other in heaven.

The Jerusalem of the past, however, hardly compares with the New Jerusalem. Nothing is the same. The first words of Rev 21 describe the New Jerusalem in terms of creation: “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea” (Rev 21:1). The parallel text in Isaiah makes an explicit reference to creation: “Behold, I will create a new heav-

“...the fragile nature of the sukkah recalls the precariousness of the world’s cities, while it strengthens the longing for the heavenly kingdom.”

foreseen the Messianic overtones of the Feast of Tabernacles: “Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles” (Zech 14:16). The prophet of the Apocalypse uses similar language: “The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it” (Rev 21:24).

Humanity’s thirst for God is finally quenched: “To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life” (Rev 21:6; cf. 22:1). The image also appears in the context of the Feast of Tabernacles. On that occasion, it was customary for the priest to draw water from the pool of Siloam with a golden jar during the morning and evening rituals of the daily sacrifices.

city of peace, as connoted by its ancient name “Salem.” It is the city of Melchizedek, the king of justice. The city of Jerusalem was also built on Mount Moriah (2 Chron 3:10), alluding thus to the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen 22:1-18).⁹ Jerusalem was also the place where God stopped the deadly sword about to decimate the people of Israel (1 Chron 21:14-16). David conquered it and made it the first capital of Israel (1 Chron 11:1-9), then kept the ark of the covenant within its walls (2 Sam 6:12-23). But the collective memory of Israel primarily associates Jerusalem with the Temple. Jerusalem is a place of prayer and worship (Pss 48:2; 122:1). The city is also the antithesis of Babylon and the symbol of the return from the exile and the end of oppression. It is the city that incites nostalgia—God’s people cannot forget Jerusalem (Ps

ens and a new earth. . . . But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight” (Isa 65:17, 18).

The new earth will be radically different. The first characteristic of this new universe is that the “sea” is no more (Rev 21:1). The “sea” in the Hebrew mindset had a negative connotation, representing void and darkness (Gen 1:2; Ps 18:12; Job 26:19; Prov 8:27), death and “nonbeing”¹⁴ (Ezek 26:19-21; Jonah 2:6; Hab 3:10), and evil (Isa 27:1; 51:9, 10). Scripture also associates “sea” with Babylon (Rev 16:12) and, in the Apocalypse, to the origins of the beast (Rev 13:1).¹⁵

The Greek word *neos* that qualifies Jerusalem means radically and “totally other.”¹⁶ God gives the New Jerusalem a new configuration and lowers it down to earth from the heavens (Rev 21:2; cf. Rev 3:12). It is not the Jerusalem of the Six-Day War, neither that of the Mosque of Omar, of the Wall of Lamentations, nor that of the Holy Sepulcher. The New Jerusalem is more than a new coat of paint or some new roadwork. The change is radical and affects everything: “I am making everything new!” (Rev 21:5).

The Consolation of God

On a personal level, the Jerusalem of above means, first of all, great consolation. It is the first truth that the Apocalypse infers: “He will wipe every tear from their eyes” (v. 4). Like death and suffering, tears shall also be no more.

Human suffering is certainly humanity’s oldest and most serious grudge against God—the God who remains silent in the presence of suffering. Where was God during times of pain and oppression? The tears of the little girl tortured by the soldiers went, apparently, unseen, but now God wipes them with His own hand. He offers no words, no explanations—only a gesture, accompanied by the promise that there are to be “no more tears.” It is the ultimate consolation, the only possible answer to the problem of suffering.

1. *Hag.* 14b; cf. *TJ Hag.* 2:1, 77b.

2. Ernest Renan, *Antichrist: Including the Period From the Arrival of Paul in Rome to the End of the Jewish Revolution*, trans. and ed. Joseph Henry Allen (Boston: 1897), 17.

3. Cf. K. A. Strand, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation: Hermeneutical Guidelines, with Brief Introduction to Literary Analysis*, rev. and enl. ed. (Worthington, OH: Ann

Arbor Publishers, 1976), 51.

4. See Jacques B. Doukhan, *Daniel: The Vision of the End*, rev. ed. (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1989), 3-6.

5. For a similar pattern of the Jewish feasts in the Gospel of John, see George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 2d ed., Word Biblical Commentary 36 (Nashville: Word, 1999), lix.

6. Cf. Hos 2:25; Zech 13:9.

7. Babylonian Talmud, *Sukkah* 116a-b.

8. Mishnah, *Sukkah* 5.1.

9. The Midrash finds within the name of Jerusalem allusions to Melchizedek and the sacrifice of Isaac: Jerus, from the same root as Moriah, alludes to the sacrifice of Isaac; and Salem hints at Melchizedek (Midrash Rabbah, *Genesis* 56.16).

10. See, e.g., Ps 24:3; Isa 2:3; 27:13; Zech 8:3; cf. Dan 9:20; 11:45.

11. *Midrash on the Psalms*, Psalm 122, section 4; *Midrash Tanhuma*, ed. Salomon Buber (1885), Numbers, 34, 35.

12. Babylonian Talmud, *Taanith* 5a; *Tanhuma*, *Pekudei*, 1.

13. 4 Ezra (2 Esd) 10:54; 7:26; 1 En. 90:28, 29.

14. The expression is borrowed from Johannes Pedersen’s *Israel: Its Life and Culture* (London: 1926-1940), vols. 1-2, 464; cf. Reymond, *L’Eau sacrée*, 213: “The Old Testament often identifies the ocean with death . . . a place of no return . . . a place where there is no communion, neither with humans nor with God.”

15. See Jacques Doukhan, *The Genesis Creation Story* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1982), 70ff.

16. Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-1976), 3: 447-450.

Rabbinic Wisdom

“The festivals make a difference between the nations and Israel: the nations eat and drink, and go to the circus and the theater, and anger the Lord by their words and deeds; Israel eats and drinks and goes to the houses of prayer to praise His name and to the houses of study to learn His glory”

(After Pesikta de-rav Kahana, 340-341).

Celebrating Sukkot

The festival of Sukkot is a special time of rejoicing (Lev 23:40). One of the unique mitvos associated with this holiday is the mitzvah to dwell in a sukkah. The sukkah, a temporary dwelling used during the first seven days of Sukkot, is a reminder of the protective clouds of glory that HaShem surrounded the people of Israel with during their wilderness wanderings.

Constructing and decorating a sukkah can be an enriching family activity, during which parents may tell stories of HaShem's redemption and guidance. A sukkah must have at least three complete walls that are not less than 3 feet tall and not more than 35 feet tall. It should cover a minimum area of 24.5 inches by 24.5 inches, and should be able to withstand a normal wind.

The sukkah must be covered with "schach," which is any plant material that grows from the ground, such as tree branches or corn stalks. These materials must be separated from the

ground before they are used in construction, and they may not have a bad odor. Finished products, such as curtains or wooden latices, should not be used for schach. The schach must be spread so that there is more shade than sun within the sukkah, but there should be enough spaces so that the stars may be seen from within.

The Torah requires us to dwell in the sukkah for all seven days of Sukkot just as we live in our home the rest of the year. However, the elderly, the very young, the ill, and the traveler are exempted from this mitzvah.

Whenever a meal is eaten the following blessing is to be said: "Blessed are

You, HaShem . . . who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to dwell in the sukkah." The sukkah is to be considered a sacred place, so common activities, such as washing dishes, are not done in it. Within the walls of the sukkah, the family may contemplate and rejoice about HaShem's tender care.





Holy Seasons of Hope and Faith

Reinaldo Siqueira
Professor of Hebrew Scriptures

Time and its holiness is a central idea in Judaism since biblical times. From the beginning of their history, the Jews received the divine injunction to hallow time on a weekly, monthly, yearly, and life-time basis. These holy times mark the cadence of Jewish life even today. The beliefs and practices attached to these times speak of the innermost essence of the Jewish faith and hope.

The New Testament and Holy Times

Interestingly, but usually unobserved by many of its readers, the Jewish holy times provide much of the cadence of New Testament history and establish the basis of Christian beliefs. A good example of this relationship is found in the writings of the apostle John. For instance in his Gospel, the report of Jesus' public ministry follows a pattern built around His

public activities in Jerusalem during festivals. Most of Jesus' teachings in John's Gospel are directly related to the religious beliefs and practices that were characteristic of these festive meetings. For instance, chapters 2:13–4:54 emphasize the purification of the Temple and the "firstfruits" of the spiritual harvest of Jesus' ministry. This section follows Jesus' first public appearance in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast and the harvesting of the firstfruits that followed it (cf. 2:13, 23; 4:34–38, 45, 54). Chapter 5 presents Jesus' healing of an invalid man on the Sabbath under the context of an unspecified Jewish festival, while chapter 6 reports Jesus' miraculous feeding of the five thousand and His teachings about the bread of life in the setting of the Passover. In 7:1–10:21, the Feast of Tabernacles was the background for Jesus' teachings concerning the living water, the light of the world, and the good shepherd, while 10:22–

42 reports events that occurred during the Feast of Hanukkah. The final segment, 11:1–20:31, is directly related to the events that took place during Jesus' last Passover Feast. His death is presented as a prophetic fulfillment of the spiritual truths symbolically represented by the Passover lamb. Chapter 21 serves as a conclusion to the apostle's report.

The New Testament as a Historical Source

The New Testament is one of the oldest historical sources for Jewish traditions associated with these holidays. An example may be seen in the report of Pentecost in Acts 2.

In the Hebrew Bible, Pentecost is presented as an agricultural festival called the "Feast of Harvest" (Exod 23:16). On the fiftieth day following Passover, the Israelites were to bring an offering of the firstfruits of their crops to the Sanctuary in praise to God for the

“The Jewish holy times provide much of the cadence of New Testament history and establish the basis of Christian beliefs.”

harvest that was just beginning.¹ According to Deut 26, Pentecost should not only be a time of thanksgiving for the incoming harvest, but it should also be an appropriate time for a renewal of Israel’s covenant with God. When the thanksgiving offering was presented in the Sanctuary, the one presenting the offering was to briefly recount Israel’s history from Abraham to himself, recognizing that all that he was and possessed was made possible only by God’s grace (Deut 26:5-10).

This biblical aspect of Pentecost as a day for renewing Israel’s covenant with God became elaborated in the Jewish religious traditions about this feast at the beginning of the Common Era. Pentecost was identified with the day when God established His covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai. The key for such precise identification was the etymological and phonetic connections between the Hebrew name of the feast, *Shavuot* (“Weeks”), the Hebrew number *Shevah* (“Seven”), and the word *Shevu’ah* (“oath”). Seven (*Shevah*) weeks from the day of Passover (a seven-time repetition of the original cycle of creation week), the people of Israel stood before Mount Sinai, pledged their allegiance through a solemn oath (*Shevu’ah*), and entered into a covenant with God in order to become His people. The characteristic elements of this ceremony were *Tevilah* (“immersion, baptism”) in water, identified by the rabbis as the meaning of the divine order found in Exod 19:10, in which the Israelites were asked to “consecrate themselves” and

“wash their clothes”; God’s glorious manifestation through thunder and lightning, a loud trumpet blast, earthquake, fire, smoke, and a thick cloud upon Mount Sinai (Exod 19:16-19); the divine invitation to the covenant through the gift of God’s Law to His people (Exod 20-23); application of the blood of the covenant upon the altar established at the foot of the mountain and upon the people at the moment they accepted God’s covenant and made an oath of faithfulness to Him (Exod 24:3-8); the pouring out of the Spirit of God upon Moses and the seventy elders who went with him on the mountain, following the giving of the Law, and who had a vision of the God of Israel (Exod 24:9-11; Num 11:16-17).

Thus Pentecost was seen as the day when God established Israel as His holy people, a holy nation, a kingdom of priests (Exod 19:5-6). The day was remembered as the one on which God established His *Kahal* (“Congregation”), a term translated *Ekklesia* in the Septuagint (cf. Deut 4:10; 9:10; 18:16 LXX).

The Jewish interpretation of the Feast of Pentecost as the day of the “Covenant at Sinai” does not appear in the ancient Jewish writings of Flavius Josephus and Philo of Alexandria, contemporaries from the first century C.E. They are found only in the later rabbinic writings. However, these ideas are clearly spelled out in the New Testament presentation of that feast. In Acts 2, when the disciples received the Holy Spirit from God during Pentecost, Luke records similar manifestations to

those at Sinai: Jews, coming from all the nations of the time, had a *Tevilah*/baptism that day as a form of reconsecration to God (Acts 2:41); there was a manifestation of the Divine Presence through signs of fire, powerful wind, and a great noise (Acts 2:2-3, 19-20); the divine invitation to the covenant through Jesus, God’s divine and resurrected Word, was extended to the people (Acts 2:11, 14-40); there was an emphasis on the death and resurrection of Jesus as the blood of the covenant that would purify the people from their sins (Acts 2:22-38); and the Holy Spirit was poured out upon God’s people (Acts 2:3-4, 17-18, 38). Thus precisely fifty days after the death of Jesus at Passover, which was seen in the New Testament as a prophetic fulfillment of the Passover lamb symbolism, the “Day of the *Kahal* /*Ekklesia* was repeated with great power and divine manifestations upon all those who renewed their covenant with the God of Israel.

The New Testament presentations of the feasts clearly point to their Jewish roots, reminding us of the need to understand them in order to fully grasp and comprehend the New Testament message of faith and hope.

1. Cf. Exod 34:22; Lev 23:15-20; Num 28:26; Deut 8:8; 16:10; 26:1-11 for a description of this feast, also called the “Day of Firstfruits,” the “Feast of Weeks,” and in Hebrew, Hag Shavuot.



Before Kippur, Teshuva

Karen K. Abrahamson

As I write this article, the High Holy Days of Judaism have come. It is the beginning of the month of Elul, the month of preparation for the coming day of Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement), and my Jewish friends have invited me to celebrate this time with them. Thus we meet each day to pray the prayer of *teshuvah* for ourselves, for our loved ones, for the congregation as a whole.

This process of *teshuvah* is one of returning to God. It involves a sincere turning away from the sins of the past year and a serious consideration of the reasons that stood behind those sins, so that we will take care not to repeat our former mistakes. It is a time to say, “I am sorry,” and a time to say, “I forgive you.” It is a time

of preparation for the judgment that comes on Yom Kippur when the house of God will be cleansed of the sins that have accumulated there throughout the year. And it is on Yom Kippur that God will vindicate and betroth Himself to His people. God says through the prophet: “I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you” (Isa 44: 22).

As I learn about these ancient holidays—the month of Elul (the month of preparation preceding Yom Kippur), Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot, I am struck by how much I already know about them as a Seventh-day Adventist. As a denomination, we do not celebrate these holidays in actual fact, but we have based our understanding of Scripture

on the lessons that they teach. As I act out these Jewish practices in light of my understanding of what they signify on a wider scale, I am coming to an even deeper appreciation of what I have learned as a Seventh-day Adventist.

One of the hallmarks of Seventh-day Adventism is the longing for the second coming of Yeshua to this earth. As early Adventists searched the Scriptures in preparation for this event, they came to understand that a day of judgment would precede the Messiah’s return. They also came to see the ancient Jewish holidays as symbols of Messiah’s acts on our behalf. For instance, the Messiah died during the celebration of the Passover. He became the Lamb whose blood was applied for our salvation. The Holy Spirit, the Comforter whom Yeshua had

promised would come in His place after His death and resurrection, descended on those who waited anxiously in the upper room on the Day of Pentecost. Then comes the preparation time preceding the final Great Day of Atonement, the final Yom Kippur. Finally, there will come the Feast of Tabernacles, the time of celebrating the people's entry into God's kingdom, the Promised Land.

As they searched the ancient Jewish prophecies, Adventists came to understand that now is the time of preparation and judgment. Some, however, in reaction to a misunderstanding of the purpose of divine judgment have become almost ascetic in an attempt to have no spot of sin in the life and appear, at times, to place human effort above divine help, thus making the great day of judgment an event to be feared and put off for as long as possible. Others have come to believe that perhaps Messiah may not come after all; that perhaps He has forgotten us.

But what if we were to reconsider the judgment and the Second Coming from the viewpoint of Judaism? When the ancient rabbis spoke of the coming Day of Atonement, they counseled that it was to be considered a time of solemn joy. In fact, the evening before Yom Kippur was to be looked forward to and celebrated because when the new day came, God would step forward in judgment to deliver His people.

The month of preparation, or Elul, that comes before Yom Kippur is a symbol of the Hebrew phrase, "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine" (Song 6:3). Just as the woman of Solomon's Song searched for her beloved and longed for him, so the people of God search for their beloved redeemer and long for His com-

ing. With joyful and, at times, anxious anticipation, they prepare themselves because when the day of judgment comes they want to be ready, for it is on this day that God will verify the identity of the ones who have been promised to Him and will enact the sacred betrothal of Himself to His people. The marriage will occur when He returns and takes His beloved with Him to the Promised Land. And so His plea is, "Return to Me, so that I may return to you."

Early Adventists answered the call of their Beloved. With joyful hearts, they proclaimed the "everlasting gospel" to a listening world: "Fear God, and give glory to him:

"This process of teshuva is one of returning to God."

for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of water" (Rev 14: 7). With great anticipation, they searched their hearts to receive the one whom they had chosen and who had chosen them.

The passage of time has removed the blunt sting of disappointment that came when Yeshua did not return as expected. But how hard it must have been to face the world again, to prepare for the soon-coming winter, to hope and believe. And yet there were some who refused to give up.

Through their continued and diligent study, the Adventist pioneers learned that they had not been totally wrong in their understandings. It was true that the time of judgment *had come* and the fulfillment of the Yom Kippur *was being carried out*. And now *is* the time of preparation, the antitypical month of Elul. We are to search our hearts and prepare

ourselves for our Beloved's coming. For just as in the marriage ceremony where the officiating officer or minister asks concerning the bridal pair, "If there is any lawful reason why this couple may not enter into marriage come forward or forever hold your peace," so the question is asked concerning the marriage between God and His people (Zech 3).

Teshuva, "return to Me, so that I may return to you." What a difference this concept makes in our understanding of the judgment of Yom Kippur and the Messiah's second coming. Judgment becomes an opportunity for the vindication of God's people; a time when we, the people of God, find acceptance and identification as the beloved of Messiah, who gave Himself for us. With solemn joy, we lay aside the old ways and prepare to live in the presence of our Beloved.

Seventh-day Adventists and Jews live in anticipation of God's judgment and coming not only during the period preceding the Day of Atonement, but every day. When Friday comes, we are reminded of the month of Elul as we prepare for the Sabbath. The Sabbath becomes the Queen of days because it is on this day that God draws especially near to His people. And we are reminded as these periods of preparation come and go that the process of *teshuva*, of returning, is an ongoing procedure because we are a people born into sin and thus have a tendency to turn again to a life of sin. But *teshuva* also holds a promise that one day the union between God and His people will be complete and on that day God will forever destroy the sin that separates us from Him. Therefore, God, our Beloved, calls us to return to Him, so that He may return to us.



Why Would Christians Do Jewish Festivals?

Jacques B. Doukhan

A new wave is moving through Christian communities; some Christians are engaging in the practice of Jewish festivals. The trend is significant enough to raise questions and reflection among both Christians and Jews: Should Christians “do” Jewish festivals?

To that question, *yes* and *no* answers are in order.

Yes, because doing the Jewish festivals may draw Christians closer to the Jews their tradition has taught them to despise. For instance, anti-Semitism was the main motivation for the repudiation of the Feast of Pessah, Passover, as the Nicene letter of Constantine testifies: “It appeared an unworthy thing that in the

celebration of this most holy feast we should follow the practice of the Jews, who have impiously defiled their hands with enormous sin, and are, therefore, deservedly afflicted with blindness of soul.”¹

*“Should Christians “do”
Jewish festivals?”*

By engaging in Jewish festivals, the Christian would, therefore, make a powerful statement against the anti-Semitic voice of the traditional church. Observance would provide a way of protesting injustice and repairing the breach.

Yes, because, by doing Jewish festivals, Christians will learn to rediscover emotional and aesthetic experiences they have forgotten to

enjoy. Christian religion, especially within Protestant currents, has often reduced itself to a set of dry beliefs. Christians, so concerned with cognitive “truth,” have forgotten how to celebrate with the body and senses. In early Christian tradition, under the influence of the Gnostic heretic Marcion, human flesh and the concept of divine creation became suspect and were no longer influential in the act of worship. Christians were concerned primarily with the spiritual world and their salvation from this evil, material, and non-spiritual world. By doing Jewish festivals, Christians will discover the holiness of bread, which is a symbol of messianic sacrifice, and the *mitsvah* of laughter. Christians will live a more incarnate religion.

Yes, because, in doing Jewish festivals, Christians will bring into their religion the power of time and rhythm through the act of remembering. They will gain an understanding of the value of learning within the adventure of worshiping and prayer. Christian religion has often become subjective, individualistic, and sentimental, at times to the point of becoming anti-intellectual, mystical, and surreal. In doing Jewish festivals, Christians will grow in their ability to become authentic human beings, in touch with the real world they are a part of. They will learn to live and wrestle with the world, to endure it, and to repair it through the art of *tiqqun*.

Yes, because Jewish festivals contain profound meanings, which enlighten and enrich biblical, Christian truth. Some will even perceive in the beautiful rituals, gems of mysterious prophecies that give greater significance to the gospel. Christians will better

“Jewish festivals are not like the weekly shabbat, which is an eternal sign that reminds us of the creation of the universe...”

understand the messianic gestures of the Lord, their Messiah, when He partook of the *matsah* at Pessah. Sukkot will open new avenues into Christian hopes and expectations for the Kingdom of God. Kippur will teach them the force of *teshuvah*, the internal movement of return to forgotten paths. Christians will have a better

“...Jewish festivals contain profound meanings, which enlighten and enrich biblical, Christian truth.”

understanding of their own holy books—the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament—which will become more of a physical part of their tradition and their life.

Thus, by doing Jewish festivals, Christians may become better Christians. And yet, the situation is not so simple. The doing of Jewish festivals will not make Christians magically or automatically holier. For it is not the human act, as wonderfully correct as this may be, that makes humans holy, but the work of the Spirit from above. Besides, this idea, as beautiful as it may be, encounters serious problems that suggest a definite *no* to the question.

No, because Christians do not have a historical festival tradition. How, then, will they celebrate the festivals? Are they going to adopt Sefaradic or Ashkenazic rituals? On what grounds will they justify one practice over another? It will be tempting to engage in creating a new way—the biblical one—which, of course, will be the better and true way. There is no need to remind that this attitude is pregnant with the old monster of anti-Semitism. The Christian engaged in the “more nearly true” Jewish festival will soon think himself or herself more Jewish than the Jews. Thus there is a real danger of falling into the old temptation of replacement theology; not to mention the fact that without the support of a historic tradition this enterprise will produce artificial, strange habits and distortions, which will ultimately

make the sacred celebration of festivals ridiculous, uncomfortable, and at the edge of sacrilege.

No, because the scriptural way requires sacrifices and offerings that were supposed to take place in the temple at Jerusalem (Deut 16:2). Pessah implies the slaughter and eating of a lamb (Exod 12:3-10). Sukkot prescribes a burnt offering (Lev 23:37). Kippur is built around several sacrifices of bulls, rams, and goats (Lev 16). Likewise, Shavuot stipulates the sacrifice of seven lambs, a bull, and two rams (Lev 23:18). From the biblical perspective, these sacrifices are not mere rituals or cultural expressions of piety; they are central to the very meaning of the festivals themselves. It is the lamb that gives Passover its meaning. The sacrifice of the lamb is designed to remind the one who offers the sacrifice of God’s passing over the blood of the slaughtered animal, thereby granting redemption (Exod 12:13). This connection is so strong that Passover is actually identified with the lamb itself (2 Chron 30:15). Pessah is the lamb. The same truth applies to Kippur, which concerns the work of atonement. Indeed, the whole mechanism of atonement revolves around sacrifice (e.g., Lev 16: 6, 11).

No, because, for Christians, sacrifices are loaded with specific meanings that point to the coming and function of the Messiah. The book of Hebrews clearly explains that they are the shadow of “things to come” (Heb10:1). A prophetic message was conveyed through the

sacrifices concerning the process of salvation: God will come down and offer Himself as a sacrifice in order to atone and redeem humanity. Now that the prophecy contained within the sacrifices has been fulfilled, sacrifices and related rituals, such as Jewish festivals, are no longer mandatory. The type has met antitype. To engage in Jewish festivals with the idea that they are compulsory for our own salva-

“While Christians may not have the cultural background that Jews have in regard to the doing of Jewish festivals, they do have the Bible that should inform their reflection and orient their practice...”

tion is to make the antitype, the Messiah, all together irrelevant.

No, because Jewish festivals are not like the weekly shabbat, which is an eternal sign that reminds us of the creation of the universe and is, therefore, always relevant and mandatory (Num 28:1-10). Shabbat was given at the end of the creation week, when sacrifices were not yet a necessary factor in the equation of salvation because sin had not yet been committed. The shabbat, unlike Jewish festivals, was a part of the Ten Commandments and was given to all of humanity. In fact, it was given to Israel even before the gift of Torah on Sinai (Exod 16:23-28). Further, Lev 23:3-4, which lists the Jewish festivals along with the shabbat, clearly suggests that there is a significant difference between the two “feasts.” In Lev 23, the shabbat is mentioned at the beginning of the list (v. 3). Then the Jewish festivals are given under the designation “these are the feasts of the Lord” (v.4). To

equate the shabbat with the festivals may affect the true meaning of shabbat, ultimately removing its mandatory character. For this reason, it is problematic to associate Jewish festivals with the shabbat. Paradoxically, by elevating the Jewish festivals to the level of the shabbat one may kill the shabbat itself.

What shall we do then? Valuing the richness of Jewish festivals, but

also being aware of the problems that are implied in doing them, Christians may find a proper way to engage with Jewish festivals.

Yes and no. Christians should explore the possibility of celebrating the Jewish festivals. But this practice should be conducted with balanced wisdom, humility, openness, and a willingness to learn. A number of practical suggestions may help Christians to find a meaningful expression of the festivals:

Relate to Jews. Jewish festivals will then become an occasion for Christians to become better acquainted with Jews and to engage in intelligent conversations to the benefit of both parties. Connecting with Jews will also safeguard Christians from the danger of anti-Semitism and the fallacy of replacement theology. As long as Christians need Jews they will not be tempted to replace them.

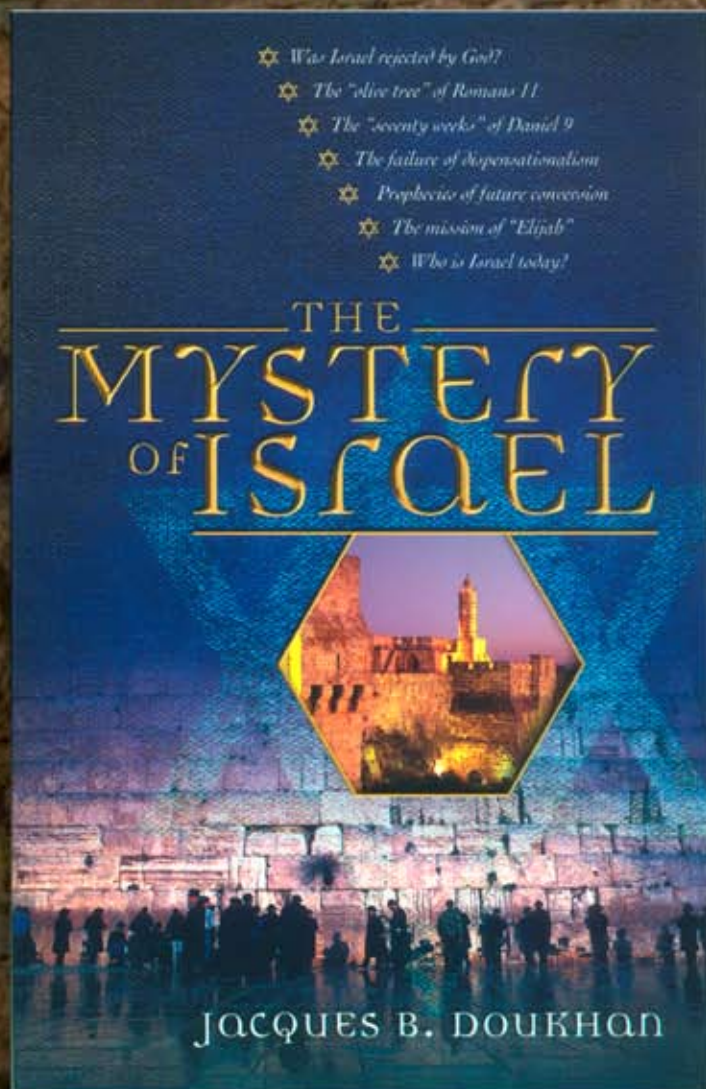
Read the Bible. While Christians may not have the cultural back-

ground that Jews have in regard to the doing of Jewish festivals, they do have the Bible that should inform their reflection and orient their practice, thereby helping them to find a correct perspective. It is not forbidden to be creative, but this should be done under the guidance and control of biblical revelation.

Relax and enjoy. Jewish festivals are not mandatory. They will supply the Christian with excellent material that will enrich their religious experience, but not replace it. The sign should not prevail over the reality it points to. Besides, one of the main lessons Christians may learn from Jews is to enjoy the goodness of the festive moment, and to not be tense and sad. Learn the joy of the feast. Learn to celebrate.

1. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 3, 18-19, *NPNF*, I, p. 524.

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The Lord of the Feasts

Clifford Goldstein

“Those who forget history,” wrote George Santanya, “are doomed to repeat it.” However pithy the saying, one could be excused for wondering just how accurate it is. After all, we have thousands of years of recorded history to inform us of what racism, bigotry, greed, imperialism, and aggression lead to; that knowledge, however, hasn’t stopped the past century from being one of racism, bigotry, greed, imperialism, and aggression. Whether remembered or not, history is, it seems, doomed to be repeated.

All this, though, doesn’t mean we still can’t learn from history. Though certainly not in a Hegelian sense, Jews do believe that history has a divine

purpose, that history is not just some uncontrolled outpouring of blind forces heading toward no good end. For Jews, historical events don’t occur at random, in isolation of each other; rather, history is the unfolding of a divine

“History is the unfolding of a divine plan that, ultimately, leads to the redemption of the world.”

plan that, ultimately, leads to the redemption of the world. This is best seen in Dan 7, when after a parade of historical kingdoms the world culminates with final redemption: “But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away

his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him” (Dan 7:26, 27).

In this context, we can better understand the basic meaning of the Jewish festivals: however much they are “the jewels on the crown of Judaism,” they are also a powerful means of educating the Jew by helping him or her remember the past and God’s work in Jewish history. We can get so caught up in the humdrum hassle of the mundane; the festivals are a way of invigorating the soul and of sanctifying the life. They are also

powerful tools to help us remember not just what God has done, but what He promises to do. In this article, we'll take a quick look at the three pilgrim holidays that mark Jewish life, that help us to remember.

Pessah, of course, commemorates the seminal event in all Jewish history: the redemption from bondage in Egypt. For here, in a real sense, the Jewish nation as a nation was born. Without the Exodus, there would be no Israel, and without Israel there would be no Jewish people. Thus, though a reminder of Jewish origins, Passover should be even more so a reminder of the role of the Lord in creating this people in their special role.

Shavuot, Pentecost, comes with a number of different understand-

ings. It is also known as *Zamn Mattan Toratinu*, or "Season of the Giving of our Torah." Indeed, in Jewish tradition, this commemorates the giving of the law at Sinai, another seminal event in the history of the Jews, which clearly shows the working of the

Lord in Jewish history. The Jews didn't make up the law; they didn't get it from the nations around them. The giving of the law was a divine act of God in behalf of His people. Shavuot, of course, helps us to remember the law and the divine responsibility of living up to it before the world. Sukkot, the Feast of Tabernacles, comes with a different spin: the Jew is reminded, by living in booths, of the transience, the frailty, the uncertainty of this life. Sukkot, in a round about way, points to a time when all Israel, all God's redeemed, will no longer face the uncertainties and insecurities of this existence, but will live in the fullness and hope of the Messianic kingdom. Sukkot is a yearly reminder that, until then, we can trust little or nothing in

this world. Our hope has to be in God and God alone.

there is a loving and caring God who has powerfully intervened in the world, most dramatically through the history of Israel and the Jewish people. These festivals,

"Whatever meanings and traditions are infused in these festivals, all point to the sovereignty of God."

along with the weekly Sabbath, not to mention the High Holy Days, all function together as a powerful reminder for the Jew to remember not only history, but the God of history—the God who promises not only to redeem the past, but the future as well. The festivals help us to remember that our lives, our hopes, our identities, and, most importantly, our futures are too important to be left to ourselves. What a fearful thought! They then, however, point us to the One in whom we owe our life, existence, and future hope.

Whatever meanings and traditions are infused in these festivals, they all point to the sovereignty of God. The festivals are powerful but joyous reminders that we are not alone in this world, but that

Sure, we can learn from history; and the best lesson we can learn is never to forget the role and work of our God in that history.

"Without the Exodus, there would be no Israel, and without Israel there would be no Jewish people."



Sabbath and Israelite Festivals

Roy E. Gane

*Professor of Hebrew Bible and
Ancient Near Eastern Languages*

In the Bible, there appears to be a close link between the weekly Sabbath and the Israelite festivals. For instance, the instructions for observance of Yom Kippur, which God communicated to Israel through Moses, stipulate that “you shall do no manner of work. . . . It shall be a sabbath of complete rest for you” (Lev 16:29, 31; NJPS). Several other festival days throughout the year (Matzot, Shavuot, Rosh Hashanah, and Sukkot) call for lesser sabbaths of rest from occupational work (23:7-8, 21, 24-25, 35-36, 39).

What is the nature of the relationship between the weekly Sabbath and the festival sabbaths? Is their meaning and application the same, or does Scripture draw distinctions between them?

There is no question that in the Bible, the weekly seventh-

day Sabbath is the foundation of all sacred time. By blessing and consecrating this day of cessation from work at the close of Creation (Gen 2:2-3), God invested it with a special relationship to Himself. Elsewhere in the Creation story, God’s activity of creating light, food, air, and companionship was for the benefit of all human beings. Similarly, on the seventh day He created sacred rest by resting. To receive the blessing of Sabbath rest, human beings created in God’s image (1:27) would follow His example by consecrating the day as He did.

Because God instituted the weekly Sabbath *before* the Fall of Adam and Eve into sin (Gen 3), its ongoing significance as the “birthday celebration of Planet Earth” does not depend on human need for redemption from sin in any era. So Sabbath is not one of the

temporary “types”/symbols that God has put in place after the Fall in order to point forward (in history) or upward (to His temple in heaven) to greater realities by which He reconciles people with Himself.

The annual festivals of ancient Israel, on the other hand, did originate from the historical crucible of redemption and symbolize milestones on the way to ultimate salvation in the future. In addition to commemorating past deliverance of the chosen people from Egypt and their present enjoyment of agricultural bounty, the Israelite festivals also connected worship of the one true God with the future. The New Testament identifies this future: Yeshua, the Passover Lamb, was sacrificed (John 19:14; 1 Cor 5:7; compare Exod 12) and rose again on the day after the Sabbath following Passover (John 20:1) as a special “firstfruits” offering (com-

pare Lev 23:11—elevated sheaf, so-called “wave sheaf”) to pave the way for a great “harvest” of human beings from death through the way of resurrection that He provides (1 Cor 15:20).

For Israelites, the festivals served as historical memorials of faith, expressions of thanks and praise to God, and harbingers of things to come. Of course, their function as harbingers ceased when future became present and the events to which they pointed were fulfilled. Now the focus of our worship is directed toward God’s temple in heaven (compare Ps 11:4), where, according to the book of Hebrews, Yeshua is our Sacrifice (rather than many animals) and High Priest (rather than a mortal, sinful man).

So should modern followers of Yeshua feel obligated to keep the Israelite festivals today? We can certainly identify with the experience of historical rescue and gratitude for present blessings that they express, even though we would not wish to participate in sacrifices that serve as harbingers, because our Lamb has come. A major problem with keeping the festivals is a practical one. To really keep the essential biblical requirements for festival observance, we would be required to go to Jerusalem and offer sacrifices there at a functioning temple of Adonay (Exod 23:14-17; 34:22-24; Lev 23; Num 28-29). But although we can travel to Jerusalem, the Romans tragically destroyed the Second Temple in 70 A.D. So today it is simply impossible to keep the biblical festivals as such.

Christians are not obligated to keep the festivals, with their core of animal sacrifices that can no longer be practiced. Nevertheless, we can have the privilege of voluntarily participating in Jewish holidays, which involve rich expressions

of faith adapted from important biblical elements that require neither sacrifice nor pilgrimage to Jerusalem. In this way, we can trace and reinforce our journey with God and gain deeper understanding of common heritage as spiritual sons and daughters of Abraham, and heirs of the covenant promise (Gal 3:29).

What about the weekly seventh-day Sabbath? Has this requirement also passed away? It is true that the Israelite ritual system honored the Sabbath with ceremonies performed on this day (Lev 24:8; Num 28:9-10). Indeed, it would be strange if Sabbath were not acknowledged in the Israelite institutions of worship. But the fact that these rituals have passed away does not diminish the original core value of the Sabbath as acceptance of sacred rest from the Creator (Gen 2:2-3; Exod 20:8-11; 31:12-17), implying allegiance to Him as Lord of human life. According to the Bible, the weekly Sabbath originated before the Fall (see above) and was made for all human beings (compare Mark 2:27). It has never been a temporary harbinger of things to come, which passes into obsolescence when greater realities arrive.

It is true that in Heb 4, God offers a total Sabbath-like rest experience to those who believe, but this does not supersede the literal weekly Sabbath. In Ps 95:7-11, to which the epistle to the Hebrews refers, ultimate rest was available to Israelites in Old Testament times and they failed to receive it only because of their unbelief, not because their weekly Sabbath was only a foretaste of better things to come. The fact that both the seventh-day Sabbath and the “rest” offered in Heb 4 were available at the same time proves that the former was not a temporary “type” to be superseded by the latter.

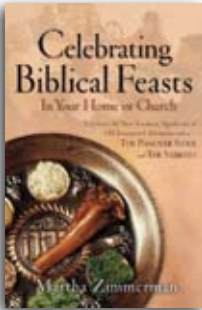
So what about Col 2:16-17, which appears to include Sabbath among things that are a “shadow” of what is to come? Does Paul here regard Sabbath as a temporary historical “type”? In verse 16, as in Ezek 45:17 and Hos 2:11, the order “festival—new moon—Sabbath” reverses the “Sabbath—new moon—festival” order in the festival calendar of Num 28–29, which lists sacrifices on weekly Sabbaths (28:9-10), at new moons (verses 11-15), and at yearly festivals (28:16–29:40). This kind of reversal (chiasm) was a common way for an ancient author to establish a literary connection. Since the source to which Paul alludes is Num 28–29, which deals with sacrifices, he is not referring to basic Sabbath rest, but to rituals performed on the Sabbath and pertaining to Sabbath in that sense, which served as “shadows” (= harbingers). His point is that Christians are not obliged to participate in the ritual system.

Just as the Lord appointed weekly and yearly times of worship and thanksgiving for the Israelites, we can benefit from regularly scheduled times to celebrate our ongoing relationship with Him. As we continue to observe the weekly seventh-day Sabbath, it reminds us that we have come from the hand of our Creator God. He sustains every breath we take (Dan 5:23), and everything good comes from Him. Even in our pressured, goal-oriented lives, Sabbath liberates us from slavery to work.

Although we no longer keep the Israelite festivals, we can learn much from them and their fulfillment. They teach us that God has a carefully crafted plan and process, now in progress, to complete our redemption from evil and all its effects, and to bring us to a better Promised Land.



Recent Books

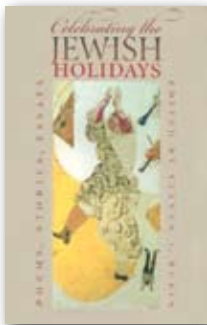


Celebrating Biblical Feasts

Martha Zimmermann
Bethany House, 2004
190 pp., \$12.99

Martha Zimmermann gives practical advice on how Christians may experience the rich heritage of Jewish festive celebrations. In the spirit of the Jewish emphasis on community

and family, she shows how the festivals can enrich family and communal life: Sabbath, Passover, the Omer, Shavuot (Feast of Weeks), Rosh Hashanah (Feast of Trumpets), Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), and Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles). She demonstrates how each festival illustrates spiritual truth, discusses the symbols used and their meanings, and shows how to prepare for and celebrate the particular festivals. Included are recipes (e.g., Passover bread or Kreplach served at Yom Kippur), special instructions (e.g., how to prepare a Golden *Yoich* or build a *sukkah*), and checklists. *Celebrating Biblical Feasts* is an excellent book for anyone who has always wondered how one's family could get a taste of the Hebrew tradition of feasts and incorporate them into their own spiritual experience.



Celebrating the Jewish Holidays

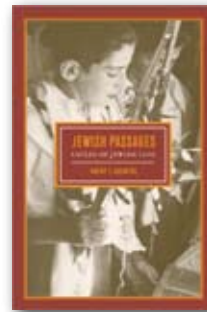
Steven J. Rubin, ed.
Brandeis University Press,
2003
431 pp., \$29.95

Steven Rubin has collected more than one hundred Jewish writings on six major Jewish holidays: Sabbath, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Hanukkah, Purim,

and Passover. The poems, memoirs, and fictional essays stem from some of the world's greatest Jewish writers (e.g., Emma Lazarus, Chaim Potok, Adrienne Rich, Elie Wiesel). Introductory essays before the individual holidays provide a brief history of each

holiday and explain the cultural traditions and significance associated with them.

Through this selection, readers will enjoy a different but profound approach to the Jewish festal cycle, gaining not only a deeper appreciation of the Jewish holidays, but also an understanding of Jewish traditions and religion. For example, one becomes intensely stirred by reading the Yom Kippur essays by I. L. Peretz, Sholom Aleichem, and Israel Joseph Singer; is delighted by pondering over the poem "Pharaoh's Meditation on the Exodus" by Pulitzer Prize winner Howard Nemerov; and is moved when perusing the Sabbath experiences of the renowned writer Alfred Kazin. Whether you read the book cover to cover or just enjoy delving into some of the captivating literary pieces, *Celebrating the Jewish Holidays* will prove to be a goldmine of inspirational thought. Steven Rubin must be thanked for providing the reader with such a superb collection of Jewish writings.



Jewish Passages

Harvey E. Goldberg
University of California Press,
2003
379 pp. \$27.50

Harvey Goldberg, Professor of Anthropology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, brings together a rich tapestry of information on how Jews express their identity in life-cycle events. In the first chapter, he explains what it means to be Jewish from an anthropological perspective. The following chapters are each devoted to particular events in the Jewish life cycle: beginnings (birth, circumcision, and naming), the rituals of education (Torah, *bar mitzvah*, and the relationship of Jewish women to Torah education), marriage (e.g., the ceremony itself, dowry, henna, divorce and polygyny, breaking the glass), pilgrimage and creating identities (e.g., Western Wall, tomb of Samuel, Meron), death, mourning, and remembering, as well as the bonds of community and individual

lives. A glossary explains Jewish terms for nonspecialists. Throughout *Jewish Passage*, Goldberg seeks to bring understanding about the new emphasis on the individual, a contemporary development in Jewish culture, as well as provide reflection on the traditional Jewish focus of community and family. The reader will be surprised at Goldberg's ability to make Jewish customs meaningful and to illustrate how Jews celebrate and observe the cycles of Jewish life.



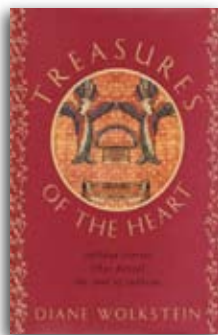
Redeeming Time

Bruce Chilton
Hendrickson Publishers, 2002
132 pp., \$19.95

Written in vivid style, this book addresses one of society's fundamental problems: our relation to time. Chilton begins by describing our present-day dilemma of finding time. Time

is felt as constraint, as a historical interval. Chilton's main thesis is that the rhythms of festivity in Judaism and Christianity will help us to understand time as rhythm, enabling us "better to locate ourselves as human beings within time, and therefore better to appreciate each other" (24). Chilton then offers a walk through the Jewish festival calendar, exploring the origin and history of the major holidays. Time in the Jewish calendar is rooted in the rhythmic interval of sacrificial practice.

Early Christianity leans on this temporal concept. Chilton successfully demonstrates how the events in the Gospels reflect and refer to the festal times of Judaism, which in turn constitute the temporal setting of crucial events and teachings. Jesus and His followers "were imbued with Israel's holy calendar" (56). Chilton explores "The Tabernacles/*Sukkoth* of Jesus," "The Pentecost/Shavuoth of Peter," and "The Passover/Pesach of James," suggesting that their concerns are linked to these major Jewish temple feasts. He also points out differences, first by comparing tractate *Yoma* in the Mishnah and the book of Hebrews, and then by referring, in particular, to the ecclesiastical Christian year that revolves around Easter, Pentecost, and Epiphany. The practical application for today is that we can only break the tyrannies of time if we understand time as a rhythm and gain the contemplative sense about it, which Christianity lost in time.



Treasures of the Heart

Diane Wolkstein
Schocken Books, 2003
360 pp., \$27.00

Diane Wolkstein, a distinguished master storyteller, skillfully takes us to the spiritual heart of the biblical stories of the Jewish festival cycle. She introduces each holiday with its brief history and her own personal insight into its meaning and celebration. She then retells biblical stories that are connected to the festivals and which are traditionally read in the synagogue (e.g., for Passover: Exodus, Song of Songs, and Josiah) and concludes with spiritual reflections on these stories. In her storytelling, Wolkstein uncovers the underlying complexities as well as the balancing themes associated with each story. Special attention is given to the balance between the feminine and the masculine by highlighting the role of female characters in the stories and introducing the feminine aspect of God. The stories are taken from the Hebrew Scriptures, but Wolkstein masterfully interweaves oral legends and midrashic teachings with the biblical text (the sources of these are carefully noted in the back of the book). Following the biblical calendar, Wolkstein begins the holiday cycle with Passover and detects a larger story marked by the changing relationship between God and His people, tracing the transitions from youth to maturity, from forgiveness to responsibility. The stories are rich treasures that "develop our own spiritual understanding and faith" and "invite us to return each year to renew our connection with ourselves and with the ineffable mystery our ancestors called the Silence That Speaks" (xxi).

Back Cover

"the bread of misery that our fathers have eaten..."

Opening lines of *Haggadah*
(Liturgical book for Passover)

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