

# THE MASTER CRAFTSMAN

David Hamshire





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*“Then I was beside Him as a master craftsman”*  
(Proverbs 8:30)

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Faithbuilders Publishing Limited  
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Chichester  
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British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data. A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN:978-1-913181-53-6

Cover Design: Faithbuilders Publishing Limited  
Typeset by Faithbuilders Publishing Limited  
Printed in the United Kingdom

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Thus says the LORD:

*“Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstall.  
Where is the house that you will build Me?  
And where is the place of My rest?  
For all those things My hand has made,  
And all those things exist,”  
Says the LORD.*

*“But on this one will I look:  
On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit,  
And who trembles at My word.”*

(Isaiah 66:1-2)





## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I thank my wife Janet, a friend when we were at school together in the late 1950s, then from April 1966, my chosen lifelong companion, for accompanying me on our physical and spiritual journey through life. Before we were married, Janet gave me a copy of Cruden's Concordance, and inside the front cover she wrote: *'Read, mark, learn and inwardly digest His Word.'* I have attempted to act on her advice.

I thank Desi Maxwell whose ministry I have benefited from, for writing the Foreword. Desi has studied at the University of Ulster and the Westminster and Princeton theological Seminaries. He entered pastoral ministry for seven years – three in Canada, followed by four in Belfast. For twenty years, Desi lectured at Belfast Bible College (and remains a senior teaching fellow) before seeking to bring the classroom to the living room through *'Xplorations'*, the ministry he co-founded and directs with his wife Heather. Given his knowledge and background, Desi's kind words are more than I could have expected and I am very grateful.

My thanks also include Dr. Ron George, from Crowborough, England, who together with his wife Nancy, are the founders of the *'Eurasia Education Foundation'*. In 2016, and again in 2017, Dr. George invited me to travel with him to Moldova to lecture to students at a Christian university on the subject of the Hebrew roots of the Christian faith. This book is largely the result of Dr. George's kind invitation.

Finally – but by no means least – I thank Mathew Bartlett, and also David Powell my publisher, for their assistance with the preparation for publication of this study. I am sincerely grateful for their help and advice.



## AUTHOR'S NOTES

That I have used the NEW KING JAMES VERSION (NKJV) of the Bible for all but one of the Scripture quotations is because it is my preferred translation. Unlike some translations, the NKJV is based on ancient manuscripts which are known as the '*Received Text*' – '*Textus Receptus*'.

In the NJKV, God's covenant name in the Old Testament is represented by the Hebrew consonants 'YWHW', and is translated as '*LORD*', or '*GOD*' (using capital letters). This pattern has been followed throughout the history of the King James Bible. This form of capitals is also used in the New Testament when quotes are taken from the Old Testament.

Wherever I have quoted Scripture, I have done so by using italics. In some places I have set words/phrases to bold to add emphasis, so highlighting detail/themes which are key to the understanding of this study. One example can be found in Proverbs 8:30, where the writer refers to the '***Master Craftsman***'. This is just one of many occasions (written before Jesus was born) where we are introduced to God's Son.

It would not surprise me if some readers queried some of my thoughts in the way I have come to understand the Bible. Why, therefore, have I published this study?

From 1959–1973, I worked as an aircraft electrician in the Royal Air Force, and for six of those years helped to maintain its fleet of four-engined Bristol Britannia passenger aircraft. On one occasion I was asked to take part in an air test, and soon after taking off from Lyneham in Wiltshire, the Captain reported he had problems with three of the four engines!

Fortunately, the problems were not too serious, but it meant that because of the icy conditions, the Captain would have to divert our landing to an airfield two hundred miles away.

Having been informed of the situation, I asked the Captain if he would allow me to investigate – to which he agreed. The first step was to consult the aircraft's wiring diagrams. This in turn led me to suspect that three engine operated devices which controlled the aircraft's anti-icing systems had failed; however, with the Captain's permission, the three devices could be by-passed. The Captain, of course, asked me if it was safe to do so. I replied: "*Sir, trust me!*"

After assuring the Captain, I set to work in the freight bay below the cabin floor to re-wire from inside the aircraft, the three faulty engine operated components. On replacing the fuses for the three circuits, hey presto, the anti-icing systems worked perfectly and we were able to return safely to base. My success in solving the problem was due solely to the fact that I was able to consult the aircraft's wiring diagrams.

During my life, I have found the same is true of the Bible. The apostle Paul knew of this principle and of how it applied to God's written word. Paul wrote: *'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work'* (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

Having been trained how to fix electrical faults – with the aid of a circuit diagram when needed – it is my prayer that this study will help you when reading the Bible. My conclusion is: The Bible begins with an introduction to God's Son, the Lord Jesus, and it also ends with Him.

David Hamshire

## FOREWORD

Bible-readers and jam-makers often adopt similar methods. Despite the apparent difference in the two occupations, the inclination is to store the fruits of their labours in neatly sealed units. Readers tend to systematize their findings and file them away in neatly organized mental compartments, while cooks use jam jars to ensure the flavours never mix! Maybe this is a wise decision when it comes to jam making, but it is dreadfully debilitating when it comes to exploring the richness of the Bible.

While we stand indebted to many scholars, much academic study of the Bible is specialized. An *'expert'* on the Hebrew Bible is not allowed to comment on the New Testament, and vice versa. Such is the degree of specialization that the view of the sweeping forest has been obscured by the twigs on the trees. The outcome is to the detriment of us all. Given the fact that Hebrew, the language of the Scriptures, has no word for theology, doctrine or creed, surely alerts us to something? All our attempts to *'organize'* the Bible into rigidly systematic units is rather meaningless. Surely, it's time to take a step back and to look at the text as a whole?

Abraham Heschel once observed that the Greek studies to understand, while the Hebrew studies to revere. Our reverence, and indeed our awe, will certainly only increase as we grow in sensitivity to interconnections of time, place and people in this unique literature. This is what David does in these pages. It's as if he invites us to don a new pair of *'tri-focals'* to see with excitement that no one text can be studied in isolation. No one angle, neither time, place, nor people, will provide a definitive interpretation, but all three combine to give us a high definition insight. The rabbis were often

masterful at this and their method sets them apart from our traditional western methods.

As you journey with David, you won't find everything sitting neatly labelled on shelves, ordered with the precision that we've come to expect. That's simply not the way that the Bible was intended to be read.

I invite you to travel with David as he discards the old containers and lets the richness of the flavours mix.

Desi Maxwell

## THE MASTER CRAFTSMAN

It is likely for many Christians, that their most well-known and much-loved verse in the Bible is John 3:16. *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”* These words, of course, are the words of Jesus, and they describe God’s loving-kindness for those who He has created.

But when was it decided that God should send His beloved Son into the world – perhaps the most important decision God has ever made? Was it at the time when Jesus’ mother, Mary, first became pregnant? Or was it much earlier than this, possibly when Isaiah wrote: *“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel”* – meaning: ‘God-with-us’ (Isaiah 7:14). Or was it before Isaiah lived?

To answer these questions, there are a number of clues from those who wrote the books of the New Testament and for which the writings of the ancient Hebrew Scriptures (the Old Testament) were instrumental to their understanding.

In Peter’s first epistle, we note that we are not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver or gold from our sinful ways, *‘...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb [a Passover Lamb] without blemish and without spot.’* Peter then continued by stating: *‘He indeed [that is Jesus] was foreordained **before the foundation of the world**, but was manifest in these last times for you...’* (1 Peter 1:18–20). So, was Jesus destined to be born, then to die as a punishment for our sin, before men and women began to populate the

earth; that is, even before ‘...*the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*’ (Genesis 6:5)?

Paul also confirms what Peter wrote. In his letter to the believers in Ephesus, Paul informs them that they have been chosen by God, “...*who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him **before the foundation of the world***” (Ephesians 1:3–4). Paul continues with his thesis when writing to Titus, who he describes as ‘...*a true son in our common faith*’. Paul states that in acknowledging the truth, that God’s elect were: ‘...*in hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, **promised before time began***’ (Titus 1:1–2).

From these statements – and others, such as what the writer of Hebrews wrote: ‘*God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds*’ (Hebrews 1:1–2) – it appears God’s plan to send His Son into the world pre-dates the Creation of what took place during the first seven days. If this is true, then is it possible the first words in the Bible have more to do with God’s Son, the Lord Jesus, than they do with Adam and his wife Eve?

This, therefore, is my premise for this book, and although some may view this study as a hypothesis, what I read in Scripture – especially its account of Creation – is why I am convinced about my faith and why I see the Bible as a trustworthy resource for those who believe in God.

If what I have written has any merit, then there could be a need for a fresh consideration of the first chapter of Genesis – a passage of Scripture which is rarely discussed because of the controversy surrounding Creation versus evolution. And



the fact that Jesus believed in Creation (Mark 10:6 and Mark 13:19), helps us to agree with Him that the evidence in Creation is substantive, rather than speculation. Speculation is how the theory of evolution originated and persists.

Because Creation includes the gift of life, it means we can live in the light of God's privilege. Sadly, however, there are also dark times. In acknowledging there are dark times, I do not mean the absence of light. Dark times are those times when evil appears to triumph over good. It can happen when by an act of hatred a person's life is taken from them. At other times it may be because of lust, or pride, which sets some people against others, and also against God.

The Bible describes such darkness – the disobedience of man – as sin, and all of us have been, or remain still, guilty of sin. This is why Jesus came and why He died. Jesus came to fulfil His Father's plan which originated long before men and women disobeyed God by yielding to temptation, and in doing so, carrying out their own sinful and selfish desires.

The disciples of Jesus spent upwards of three-and-a-half years with Him, and during that time they learnt to esteem others better than themselves (Philippians 2:3). To live our lives for the benefit of others is how Jesus lived, and for many this requires a complete transformation of the way we once lived. Indeed, the Gospel has the power to change our lives for the benefit of whoever we may encounter, and many have found that in putting Jesus first in their lives has been the most important decision they have ever made.

Jesus came to set us free from our wrongdoing, to help us live a new way of life such that our thoughts and actions might be utterly transformed. For example, Paul wrote about love – not sensual love which today is so prevalent and which can result in much unhappiness, but God's love,

which God wants us all to experience. The apostle Paul wrote: *'Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails'* (I Corinthians 13:4-8).

In the pages that follow, what I have tried to do is to explain how I see Jesus as the focus of the first account of Creation. But there is more – and especially throughout the pages of the Old Testament. In the New Testament, Jesus is seen as the Saviour of all who put their faith in Him, but in the Old Testament, Jesus, although spoken of, is often concealed – that is to those who do not recognise their need of Him. And so we need both sections of the Bible; the part which was written before Jesus was born (which He frequently quoted), and the Scriptures which were written after He died, rose again, and then ascended to His Father.

## **BREAD AND WINE**

Shortly before Jesus was arrested, then led away for a mock trial before being crucified, Jesus took bread and gave it to His disciples. He then invited them: *"Take, eat; this is My body."* The bread represented the physical body of Jesus – but not His life.

Next, Jesus took a cup filled with wine and said: *"Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins"* (Matthew 26:26-28). The cup of wine Jesus gave to His disciples represented His blood, His life, which was poured out when He was nailed to a Roman crucifix. It is in these two combined elements, the physical body of Jesus and His blood, that we can receive forgiveness for our sin and God's promise of eternal life.

The effectiveness of what Jesus wrought at Calvary is that it was designed to take place from before the first man and woman appeared on the Earth. When Paul wrote to the Colossians about Jesus, he explained: *'He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation'*. Paul then describes Jesus' pre-history accomplishment: *'For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on the earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist'* (Colossians 1:15-17). Within this description we see the role of a **'Master Craftsman'**, the Lord Jesus, who when the time came for His work on Earth to be completed (as His Father had said when He completed His work of Creation), that just before He died, Jesus said: *"It is finished!"*

What Paul emphasises in his letter to the Colossians is that Jesus was expected to be born into this world as a man, and that from when His birth took place, His life and His death would follow a prophetic plan which God had known about long before time (in the way we think of time) began.

### **THE BEST OF THE MEATS AND THE FINEST OF THE WINES**

Please note that in the passage quoted from the prophet Isaiah which follows, it describes the marriage supper of the Lamb of God (God's Son) who came to Earth to bring to birth a gathering of people for God's Kingdom. This prophecy has yet to be fulfilled. *'On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine – **the best of meats and the finest of wines.** On this mountain He will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; He will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; He will remove the disgrace of His people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken. In that day they will say, "Surely*

*this is our God; we trusted in Him, and He saved us. This is the LORD, we trusted in Him; let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation” ’ (Isaiah 25:69. N.I.V.). In tandem with Isaiah’s prophecy, in John’s Gospel we read what Jesus said about Himself: **“For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed”** (John 6:55).*

These words of Jesus are connected to Proverbs 9:1–6, and how the writer describes the seven Pillars of Wisdom. The first two Pillars are a description of what is to be included in His banquet, such as **‘The best of the meat’**, represented by Jesus’ body, and **‘The finest of the wine’**, represented by His blood. This was confirmed at a wedding when Jesus turned water into wine, when the master of the feast said to the bridegroom: *“You have kept the good [finest] wine until now”* (John 2:10). Do not these accounts in Isaiah, Proverbs and John’s gospel, point to what is to take place at the wedding supper of the Lord Jesus, when He will have defeated death and will wipe away the tears from the faces of His people?

While he was in exile on the island of Patmos (Revelation 1:9), the apostle John had a vision which included details of the marriage supper of the Lamb. Its venue is described as being: *‘...a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared [made ready] as a bride adorned for her husband.’*

John then heard a loud voice (confirming what Isaiah had written). *“Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away”* (Revelation 21:1–4).

What follows in this study is a description of what has been for millennia, God's plan (and only plan) for our salvation. This plan, which is not complex, was designed for those who would chose Jesus to be their Saviour and who would one day attend His wedding banquet as His guests (and as His Bride). But is attendance at this banquet by invitation only? Yes, but the good news is; everyone is invited.

Pillars are renowned for what they do – they give strength and support to the structure for which they were designed. This is what we discover in Proverbs, that *'Wisdom has built her house, she has hewn out her seven pillars'* (Proverbs 9:1). This house, built from living stones and joined to the chief cornerstone who is God's elect and precious (1 Peter 2:4–5), has been designed for all who seek after Wisdom.

According to Proverbs 9:1–6; Wisdom's seven Pillars are:

1. Wisdom, she has slaughtered her meat – a life has been sacrificed.
2. Wisdom, she has mixed her wine.
3. Wisdom, her table has been furnished – made ready.
4. Wisdom's maidens announce from the highest places of the city: *"Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!"*
5. Wisdom's maidens invite others to attend, including: *"...him who lacks understanding."*
6. Wisdom, she invites the guests/bride to: *"Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed."*
7. Wisdom, her counsel is: *"Forsake foolishness and live, and go in the way of understanding."*

The fact that the preparation and participation in a simple meal is the focus of Proverbs' seven Pillars of Wisdom, is one which should not be missed. According to the authors Craig G. Bartholomew and Ryan P. O'Dowd's in their theological introduction to the 'OLD TESTAMENT WISDOM LITERATURE' (2011), and in their comments on the closing words of Proverbs, they write:

Wine, together with bread and oil, are the most symbolic of foods. As Leon Kass argues, eating is perhaps the most powerful act we do as physical creatures. Compared to wisdom, eating may be a humble subject, but is no trivial matter. It is the first and most urgent activity of all animal and human life. We are only because we eat. Food [they assert], reminds us of our dependence as creatures, and wine of the mystery and richness of creation.

In the New Testament, with the arrival of the Messiah, the kingdom (John 2) and the Lord's Supper, bread, wine and oil [the Holy Spirit?], feature centrally as we feast on the Lord himself as our entrance into the redeemed human life. These foods stand as signs against the evil, injustice and poverty in the world while also affirming the place of celebration.

The above assessment is an abridgment of what is included in Proverbs description of the seven Pillars of Wisdom' – *'The Lord's Supper'* – for it was a prelude to His final Supper, when those who have been invited and who will be present, will rejoice as they celebrate with their Messiah – the Lord Jesus who died and rose again – God's plan for eternity.

## THE SUN, THE MOON AND THE EARTH

For the Master Craftsman's plan to meet its objective, first we must consider the Lunar Calendar as observed by Jewish people, versus the Solar Calendar as observed by Gentiles. Months in the Lunar Calendar are fixed to the time it takes for the Moon (our travelling companion) to orbit the Earth; a Synodic Month. For the Solar Calendar, it follows the time taken for the Earth and Moon to orbit the Sun; a Solar Year.

The Lunar Calendar is tied to the movement of the Moon as it orbits the Earth when each lunation lasts for twenty-nine days, twelve hours, forty-four minutes and three seconds.

What I find is so remarkable about the Moon – which is fixed vertically on its north and south poles – ***is that it turns on its axis by exactly the same period of time as it takes for the Moon to orbit the Earth.*** This is why we never see the back of the Moon, only the Moon's face. For those who have sent cameras to photograph the back of the Moon, they have discovered that as with the Moon's face – which we can see clearly from the Earth and the battering it has received by a plethora of objects – the back of the Moon has also been battered in a similar way. “*Why...*” we may ask, “*...has the Moon, but not the Earth, been battered in this way?*”

A Lunar Year, consisting of twelve Lunar months, alternates between months of twenty-nine days (months with even numbers), and months of thirty days (months with uneven numbers). This means that a Moon's cycle of twelve Lunar months, lasts for three hundred and fifty-four days, which is approximately eleven days shorter than a Solar Year. In order to correct this anomaly, so that Lunar years do not get out of phase with the Earth's seasons, every two/three years

an extra month is added to the Lunar Calendar to bring it into line with the Solar Calendar. This adjustment is made seven times in every nineteen year cycle.

An important reason for making these adjustments is not only to ensure the Lunar Calendar keeps in phase with the astronomical seasons, but also the Jewish people's religious festivals – their seven annual Appointed Times of the LORD – take place at the correct times in the year.

Turning to the Solar Year, the time it takes for the Earth (and Moon) to orbit the Sun is three hundred and sixty-five days, five hours, forty-eight minutes and forty-five seconds. The distance travelled is five hundred and eighty-four million miles. If two children were playing in the Congo Republic, without giving it too much thought, they would be travelling at one thousand miles-per-hour in the direction of the Earth's rotation of its axis – which is tilted at twenty-three degrees. They would also be travelling at sixty-seven thousand miles-per-hour as they circumnavigate the Sun.

It is within this set-piece order of Creation that these cycles of time take place, and over prolonged periods of time. If they failed to hold sway in the way that they do, we would not be here. Life on Earth would be almost impossible.

Brian E. Cox, Professor of Particle Physics at the School of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Manchester, has said concerning the Solar System:

The Solar System is driven by rhythms so regular that the whole thing could be run by clockwork. It seems extraordinary that such a well ordered system could have come into being spontaneously, but it is in fact a great example of the beauty and symmetry that lies at the heart of the universe.



Of course, Professor Cox is correct, the Solar System is quite extraordinary, but if it had been left to chance, to evolution, it is inconceivable it could have originated in the way that it did. Therefore, we should conclude, the Sun, Moon and the Earth are the work of the Creator, which is why He said of all He had made: *'...indeed it was very good'* (Genesis 1:31).

God's plan as described in Genesis 1:1–2:3, is that we might understand who God's Master Craftsman is. And just before the *'Word of God'* became a man in human flesh, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream – himself a master craftsman – and said to him: *"...you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins"* (Matthew 1:21).

Shortly before Jesus died – *'Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set his **face** to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before His **face**'* (Luke 9:51–52). – Jesus knew what was about to happen. He would be flogged and His **face** would become as bruised as the Moon's face after being so terribly battered.

Today, this similitude of the bruising experienced by Jesus and the Moon can be seen in the lunar seas of dark basaltic lavas which are clearly visible from the Earth. Prophetically, Isaiah looked to the future and to the abuse Jesus would suffer, and so was inspired to write: *'Just as many were astonished at you, so His visage [His **face**] was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men; so shall He sprinkle [startle] many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths at Him; for what had not been told them they shall see, and what they had not heard they shall consider'* (Isaiah 52:14–15). In the next chapter, Isaiah then informs us why the face of Jesus was to become so terribly bruised. *'But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed'* (Isaiah 53:5).

Isaiah then goes on to describe our predicament. *'All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.'* The suffering Jesus endured was because of our tendency to veer away from God, but in wanting us to follow Him, His Son was: *'...led as a lamb to the slaughter.'* This is why, *'...it pleased the LORD to bruise Him'* (Isaiah 53:6, 7 and 10).

God's response, *'...it pleased the LORD to bruise Him'*, is this not an unusual response? How can it be pleasurable for any father to see his son so vilified? Perhaps the answer to this question is in what we read in Hebrews 12:1–3. *'Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses [Hebrews 11], let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy [the pleasure] that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.'* The *'joy'* Jesus foresaw was that having endured the cross, we as God's people, might experience the radiance of His presence.

The Sun, which is four hundred times the diameter of the Moon and four hundred times the distance the Moon is from the Earth, is why when there is a total eclipse of the Sun, the two appear as being of equal size. During the time of a Solar eclipse – *when the protection afforded by the Moon is seen as its shadow passes over the Earth* – is when it is safe to look at the Sun and observe its Corona, its crown of light which extends far out into space. *'Corona'* is the Latin word for *'Crown'*. In Psalm 91:1, we read of those who dwell in the secret place of the Most High; that they *'...shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.'*

In 2019, Corona was added to virus to become Coronavirus. This use of the word Corona, or Crown – referred to by the

U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson as: *"This devilish illness" – is something of an enigma. Crucially, Isaiah once prophesied about two Crowns/Coronas. 'Woe to the **crown** [Corona] of pride ... [it] is a fading flower.'* But for those who seek God and who are contrite, *'...the LORD of hosts will be for a **crown** [Corona] of glory and a diadem of beauty to the remnant of His people'* (Isaiah 28:1–5). Jesus also made reference to this same enigma – that in 2020, as face coverings which were once the trade-mark of a thief quickly became the norm as the Coronavirus affected the lives of billions of people – when He said: *"The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly"* (John 10:10).

It is because God's appearance is resplendent with His glory that we cannot see God. In Malachi 4:2, Jesus is described as: *'The Sun of Righteousness'*. And in Revelation 1:16, Jesus' countenance, His face, is described as: *'The Sun shining in its strength'*. This is one of the reasons why God sent His Son – to reflect the glory of His Father – who when speaking of the last days when the harvest of His people will be gathered in, said: *"And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; **men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth**, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near"* (Luke 21:25–28).

Meanwhile, David the Psalmist, having observed the waxing and the waning of the Moon, wrote: *"When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?"* (Psalm 8:3).

The apostle Paul was also aware of God's work in Creation, and so he wrote to the Christians in Corinth: *'There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory'* (1 Corinthians 15:41).

However, there is a crucial caveat regarding these things for which we should all be aware. The Bible states that we must not look upon the things of Creation – which includes the various things made by man from the elements of Creation and which will *always* pass away – and elevate them to a status which is above and beyond their intended purpose.

Moses, once described as a humble man who God spoke to face-to-face for he was faithful (Numbers 12:3–8), also knew of this important principle, and so he warned the children of Israel: *"And take heed, lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, you feel driven to worship them and serve them, which the LORD your God has given to all the peoples under the whole heaven as a heritage"* (Deuteronomy 4:19).

Instead of revering the Sun, the Moon the stars of heaven and planet Earth – *and the things of Earth as some have a tendency to do and so become like matter being sucked into a Cosmic Black Hole where no light exists* – rather, we should see and respect them as God's gift; that is, our inheritance, and so worship their Maker instead.

Having looked briefly at the three planets which are at the heart of our existence and upon which Earth's various forms of life are totally dependent, we come now to the Biblical account of the first seven days. For generations, it has been widely accepted that a week of seven days is the perfect cycle of time for man's welfare and continuation. Six days for work and the seventh day for rest. *But why seven days?*

## THE FIRST DAY, THE FESTIVAL OF PASSOVER, THE FIRST PILLAR OF WISDOM

*'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said: "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day' (Genesis 1:1-5).*

When considering the events of the first day, is it possible they may not be as straight-forward as tradition suggests? Let us take just one example: What is the nature of its light? Clearly it is not the light of the Sun, for the Sun does not feature until the fourth day. This description of the first day is a reminder of how the features of light defeats darkness, and takes us to what was once revealed to the apostle John. *'I saw a new heaven and a new earth ... the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, **prepared as a bride adorned for her husband**. The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. **The Lamb is its light**' (Revelation 21:1-2 & 23). The 'Lamb' which is its 'Light', is the Lord Jesus.*

Before the children of Israel were set-free from being slaves to the Egyptians, God told Moses to inform the people that on the tenth day of their first Lunar month, they were to select one-year-old male lambs without blemish (or fault). Four days later, the day of preparation for the Passover (its Hebrew name is *'Pesach'*), the lambs were killed and blood from the lambs was then applied to the doorposts and the

lintel of each house as a sign that their houses were occupied by God's people.

A few hours later on the fifteenth day of the first month and at midnight (Exodus 12:29), a time of darkness (though there would have been a full Moon for Passover took place mid-way through the first Lunar month), God passed-over Egypt. For the children of Israel whose houses had been marked with the blood of the Passover lambs, they were spared God's judgement and so nobody died. However, in the houses of the Egyptians from Pharaoh's household down, all the first-born of the Egyptians died.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem on the tenth day of the first month – the day in the time of Moses when the Passover lambs had been chosen to be set-aside for the Passover (Exodus 12:3 and John 12:1 & 12) – it was because four days later on the eve of Passover, Jesus would die as He became the '*Lamb of God*' who would set free from their slavery to sin, all who put their trust in Him.

The night before Jesus died, He prayed: "*And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. ...for You loved Me before the foundation of the world*" (John 17:5 & 24). Jesus – "*I am the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last*" (Revelation 22:13) – knew that His work on Earth was about to reach its climax, when He would be nailed through His hands and His feet to a Roman cross.

Recalling how Jesus can be observed as '*The Light of the World*' – remember, on the first day of Creation God said: "*Let there be light*" – the evening before the '*Light of the World*' was to be extinguished at the time of the Passover observance, Jesus explained to His disciples what was about to happen to Him. "*A little while longer the light is with you.*

*Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light”* (John 12:35–36). A little earlier, Jesus had also told His disciples: *“I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life”* (John 8:12).

Jesus, therefore, the *‘Light of the World’*, is linked to the first day when God said: *“Let there be light”*, and the first Jewish festival, Passover, the day when the children of Israel were set-free at midnight from what had been their darkest hour. The drawing near of the time when the Jewish people would have been preparing for their annual Passover celebration, was the correct time for Jesus to have taken His last breath.

The appearance of light on the first day, explains how Jesus became: *‘...the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world’* (Revelation 13:8). It was that He might take upon Himself the darkness of our sin, and so the death of Jesus at the time of the celebration of Passover, corresponds to the first Pillar of Wisdom: ***‘She has slaughtered her meat’*** (Proverbs 9:2).

I realise this description of how Jesus died is harsh, but it is echoed in a prophesy Isaiah once recorded. In Isaiah 53:7, we read: *‘He was led as a lamb to the **slaughter**, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.’* In Hebrew the word that is used for altar (*mizbeach*) is connected to the terms: *‘To slaughter and/or to sacrifice’*. To enable us to be set-free from our sin – past, present and future – Jesus knew that He had to die and in the manner in which Isaiah had prophesied.

The light we read of in Genesis 1:3, had been foreseen before Earth’s time began – then later, and at the time of Passover, God’s Light was extinguished. Is this why when Jesus was

dying, the light of the Sun was withheld from noon for three hours (Luke 23:44)? If so, this appears to be confirmed by what God once said to Amos: *"And it shall come to pass in that day," says the Lord God, "That I will make the sun go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in broad daylight; I will turn your feasts into mourning ... I will make it like mourning for an only son, and its end like a bitter day"* (Amos 8:9–10). This explains why Passover, the first of the seven Appointed Times, is linked intrinsically to the first Day and the first Pillar of Wisdom: ***'She has slaughtered her meat'***.

In his book 'JESUS THE JEWISH THEOLOGIAN', Dr. Brad Young refers to Proverbs 3:19 – *'The LORD by wisdom founded the earth...'* Dr. Young then quotes Proverbs 9:1. *'Wisdom has built her house, She has hewn out her seven pillars'*. In his conclusion of these verses, Dr. Young says:

These seven pillars refer to the seven days in which God created the world.

Deliverance from harmful temptations which may then go on to become our task-masters, can only take place if there is a way of rescuing men and women. See 1 Corinthians 10:13. For Jewish people, they continue to remember this lesson when they celebrate the Passover, the time when God rescued them from four hundred years of slavery.

As we recall Jesus being the *"Light of the World"*, and how He suffered at the time of the Jewish remembrance of Passover, Matthew reminds us of how Jesus fulfilled one of Isaiah's prophecies which speaks of the *'Light'* and how He came to defeat the power of sin and the fear of death. *'And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet saying: "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the*



*sea, beyond the Jordon, Galilee of the Gentiles; **the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region of the shadow of death, Light has dawned***" (Matthew 4:13–16). The words that Matthew quoted can be found in Isaiah 9:1–2.

John, a disciple of Jesus, begins his gospel by using the same introduction as recorded in Genesis 1:1, *'In the beginning...'* But John then adds to his introduction by saying, *'...was the Word [Jesus], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God'* (John 1:1–2).

John then continues by introducing us to John the Baptist, who was sent by God and who came, *'...to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe.'* John then states that John the Baptist, *'...was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him'* (John 1:7–10). John's approach is to recall the beginning and how on the first day God said: *"Let there be light"*, then to add: *'...the Word [Logos] became flesh [meat] and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory...'* (John 1:14).

To confirm what John had come to understand, the writer of Proverbs (Proverbs 8:22–31) conveys to the reader what is probably one of the most compelling passages to be found in Scripture about the relationship Jesus had with His Father before time began.

*"The LORD possessed me at the beginning of His way,  
Before His works of old."*

*"I have been established from everlasting,  
From the beginning, before there was ever an earth."*

*"When there were no depths I was brought forth,  
When there were no fountains abounding with water."*

*"Before the mountains were settled,  
Before the hills, I was brought forth;  
While as yet He had not made the earth or the fields,  
Or the primal dust of the world."*

*"When He prepared the heavens; I was there,  
When He drew a circle on the face of the deep,  
When He established the clouds above,  
When He strengthened the fountains of the deep,  
When He assigned to the sea its limit,  
So that the waters would not transgress His command,  
When He marked out the foundations of the earth,  
**Then I was beside Him as a master craftsman;**  
And I was daily His delight,  
Rejoicing always before Him,  
Rejoicing in His inhabited world,  
And my delight was with the sons of men."*

In his commentary on these verses, Charles Bridges (1794–1869), a leading Christian of his time, wrote:

So glorious are the rays of eternal supreme Deity, distinct personality, and essential unity, that the mysterious, ever-blessed Being – *'The Word, who was in the beginning with God, and was God'* – now undoubtedly stands before us. Curiously, to pry into the mode of His subsistence, would be intruding into those things which we have not seen. To receive His own revelation of Himself is our reverential privilege.

For God to reveal to men and women His Son as His **'Master Craftsman'**, is indeed an honour and a privilege; therefore, should we not acknowledge Jesus as the apostle Paul once

acknowledged Him in what he wrote to his friend Timothy? *'He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen'* (1 Timothy 6:15-16).

In Paul's epistle to the believers in Rome, Paul also wrote: *'The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil its lusts'* (Romans 13:12-14).

Again, the apostle John, in the first of his three epistles wrote: *'If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus Christ [God's Son] cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness'* (1 John 1:6-9).

The teaching John majors on is that God is light, and so he reminds us of what took place on the first day. This is why at the time of Passover, innocent lambs had to die. In spiritual terms, these two events are epitomized in the first Pillar of Wisdom: ***'She has slaughtered her meat'*** – and points us to non-other than the person of the Lord Jesus Himself.

Also included in the first day, we read in Genesis 1:2, *'And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.'* A number of Jewish sages have connected this word *'hovering'* with the word *'rest'* as recorded in Isaiah 11:2. *'The Spirit of*

*the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.'*

These six aspects – in Hebrew six is the number of man – denote the qualities of God's first-born Son, He who came to reveal the Father to us, for ***'God is light and in Him is no darkness at all'*** (1 John 1:5).

#### **FOOTNOTE – FROM WHENCE WE CAME**

In the passage from Proverbs chapter eight that I quoted on pages 33–34, verse twenty six reads as follows: *"While as yet He had not made the earth or the fields, or the primal dust of the world."* Primal dust may refer to God's provisioning for the making of man in His image. *'And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being'* (Genesis 2:7). Similarly, in Psalm 103:14, we read: *'For He [The LORD God] knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.'*

In Paul's first letter to the believers in Corinth, Paul also refers to *'dust'* when linking Adam, the first man, with Jesus the Lord of heaven, and how we who like Adam are made of dust – who Paul says in his letter to the believers in Rome, that Adam *'is a type of Him who was to come'* (Romans 5:14) – may, if we follow Jesus, become like Jesus.

This is how Paul describes man and the contrast that exists between man and the Lord Jesus. *'The first man [Adam] was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man [Jesus] is the Lord from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man'* (1 Corinthians 15:47–49).

## THE SECOND DAY, THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD, THE SECOND PILLAR OF WISDOM

*“Then God said, “Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.” Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day’ (Genesis 1:6–8).*

Next, we come to the second day, and for what those who study the myriad of objects in the Universe (and at great expense) are constantly searching for – signs of water on which all of life depends. At ninety-three million miles from the Sun, it is recognised by astronomers that the Earth is the perfect distance away from the Sun for water to exist and in its three forms – solid, liquid and gas (vapour).

The acknowledgement by mariners of the waters which are below the expanse being divided from the waters which are above the expanse, is that sea water contains salt, and if they were to be cast-adrift in a lifeboat in the middle of an ocean, they can still die of thirst. Although the lifeboat alone may not save them, the lifeboat and a few litres of drinking water may give them a few extra days and a much greater chance of being saved.

The waters described as being above the expanse refers to the Hydrologic Cycle which is powered by the Sun as salt water by evaporation turns to water vapour. And when the water vapour condenses and forms clouds, the waters that are suspended within the clouds then fall on the land as rain, for plants to flourish and God’s creatures to drink.

According to the on-line encyclopedia Wikipedia, the Earth's water cycle is the continual movement of water on, above, and below the surface of the Earth.

The mass of water on Earth remains fairly constant over time, but the partitioning of the water into the major reservoirs of ice, fresh water, saline water and atmospheric water is variable, depending on a wide range of climatic variables. The water moves from one reservoir to another, such as from river to ocean, or from the ocean to the atmosphere, by the physical processes of evaporation, condensation, precipitation, infiltration, surface runoff, and subsurface flow. In doing so, the water goes through different forms: liquid, solid and vapour.

The water cycle involves the exchange of energy, which leads to temperature changes. When water evaporates, it takes up energy from its surroundings and cools the environment. When it condenses, it releases energy and warms the environment. These heat exchanges influence climate.

The evaporative phase of the cycle purifies water, which then replenishes the land with freshwater. The flow of liquid water and ice transports minerals across the globe. It is also involved in reshaping the geological features of the Earth, through processes including erosion and sedimentation. The water cycle is also essential for the maintenance of most life and ecosystems on the planet.

Notice that in the evaporation phase of the Earth's water supply, water is purified. Only purified water is suitable for land based plants and other forms of life to exist. For many, nature's process of purifying water is seemingly miraculous; yet it is a daily occurrence. And if for any reason the rains should fail to materialize, it can become a crisis situation.

Biblically, when two is featured – as in the second day – it often indicates separation, or division, for it is the first number which can be used to illustrate two distinctive parts, or aspects. On the second day, God divided the waters by means of a firmament, which He then called *'Heaven'*. Later, Jesus taught His disciples that there is also a division between those who believe in God, and those who do not believe, and as a result there will always be two groups of people. God once said to the children of Israel: *"I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life that both you and your descendants may live"* (Deuteronomy 30:19).

Man's freedom to choose life rather than death, is linked to the way God divided the waters on the second day, and division is what Jewish people do when they observe the festival of Unleavened Bread, when they remove all traces of leaven from their homes, for leaven is often symbolic of sin. In a similar way to what happens when a cook adds yeast (leaven) to bread flour, habitual sin can infiltrate and infuse a person's life. Its access is through wrongful desires, sight, and pride (1 John 2:16).

*"Life and good, [or] death and evil"* (Deuteronomy 30:15), is related to what God did on the second day, when He created the seas (death) and the waters on the dry land (life).

God's instructions to the children of Israel for the keeping of the feast of Unleavened Bread were given before they left Egypt. In Exodus 12:16–17, we read: *"On the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but that which everyone must eat – that only may be prepared by you. So you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall*

*observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance."*

Notice that God's instruction for the keeping of the festival of Unleavened Bread is that it is to be observed forever as a lesson for future generations (for Jews and for Gentiles).

The unleavened bread used for this '*Appointed Time*' is called '*Matzah*', and is perforated with its holes forming rows, or stripes. Matzah reminds us of how the hands and feet of Jesus were pierced by nails. After Jesus had died, His side was also pierced with a spear and blood and water flowed from Him (John 19:34). What happened at Calvary is the reason we can be cleansed from our sin, for it is in these two elements that the basic requirements for life exists.

In Psalm 22:16 (written one thousand years before Jesus died), we read: *"They pierced My hands and My feet..."* In Isaiah 53:5 (written seven hundred years before Jesus died), *'But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.'* Finally, in Revelation 1:7: *'Behold, He is coming with the clouds [for 'clouds', see Daniel 7:13-14, the supernatural power of God], and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.'*

The second Jewish feast, that of Unleavened Bread, is linked to the division God created on the second day when He divided the waters. Later, God repeated this act of division when He divided the Red Sea to enable the children of Israel to leave Egypt following their four hundred years of slavery (Genesis 15:13 & Acts 7:6). These examples of the division of water are also pictures of water baptism. When a person who has come to faith in Jesus is baptised, the water is divided. Baptism is symbolic of dying, only to live anew.



Baptism – immersion in water – is a custom practiced not only by Christians. For millennia, Jewish people have been immersing themselves in a ‘Mikvah’ – a type of bath – for them to seek and obtain religious purity. And when a Jewish person is immersed in water, they pray: *“Barukh ata Adonai Elohenu melekh ha’olam asher kideshanu b’mitzvotav v’tzivanu al ha’tevillah.”* This translates from the Hebrew into English as: *“Blessed are You, O Lord, our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with Your commandments and commanded us concerning the immersion.”*

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus spoke of two gates (as we have seen, two can equal division). *“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it”* (Matthew 7:13–14).

The second day and the second Jewish festival, Unleavened Bread, points us to how Jesus who is righteous, died for the unrighteous that He might bring us into a relationship with Himself and with His Father.

Paul the apostle also knew about this aspect of division, and of relating it to the eating of unleavened bread. Paul wrote: *‘Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore, purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth’* (1 Corinthians 5:6–8).

By using the metaphors of leavened and unleavened bread, Paul refers to these to explain how that when Jesus died, He enabled us to be cleansed from our sin and for our lives to be

changed/converted to one of righteousness. Because Jesus was without sin, He is the fulfilment of the Jewish festival of Unleavened Bread. Jesus once said about Himself: *"I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst"* (John 6:35). It is only my personal opinion, but I suspect that Jesus may have been thinking about unleavened bread, not leavened bread.

Just before Jesus died, Pilate, who was the chief authority in Jerusalem, after having questioned/examined Jesus in a similar way as historically those who would have examined the Passover lambs (*'Paschal Lambs'*) for any defects before sanctioning their death, said of Jesus no less than three times: *"I find no fault in Him"* (John 18:38 & 19:4 & 6).

When the wine at a wedding which Jesus attended had been consumed, and the mother of Jesus said to the servants: *"Whatever He says to you, do it"*, Jesus told the servants to fill six large pots with water. After they had been filled with water, Jesus told the servants to draw out some of the water which had then become wine. When the wine was poured out, it was said the new wine tasted better than the old wine (John 2:1–11). This miracle is a reminder of Isaiah 55. Part of it reads as follows: *"Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy **wine** and **milk** without money and without price. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts"* (Isaiah 55:1 & 9). Spiritually, wine is the archetype of *'Blood'* (Life); Milk is the archetype of *'God's Word'* (Wisdom).

This miracle is an example of the way Jesus can change a person's life. When we ask Jesus into our lives, we become a new creation as sinful ways are abandoned and all things become new. It is because Jesus, God's chosen vessel, when His side was pierced, a mixture of water and blood emerged.

Red wine, which in Biblical terms represents the life–blood of Jesus – *“For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the alter to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul”* (Leviticus 17:11) – is what believers in Jesus partake of at the meal of Holy Communion, when they remember Him and His dying on a cross on the outskirts of Jerusalem.

The second Pillar of Wisdom, *‘She has mixed her wine’* (Proverbs 9:2), points to the provision of the life of Jesus in His blood – He who is the Son of God and at the same time the Son of Man – which has the power to cleanse (divide) us from our sin (1 John 1:7). For those who may not be familiar with this aspect of the mixing of wine (blood) by a factor of two, this will become much clearer when we come to and consider the sixth Day, the sixth Appointed Time of the LORD (the Day of Atonement), and the sixth Pillar of Wisdom.

The mixing of two bloods is how the Bible describes a blood covenant is made, and although this may be a mystery for some readers, nevertheless, according to the apostle Paul, when Jesus as a man died, Jesus in the image of His Father (God) also died. When Paul was on his way to Jerusalem to celebrate the Day of Pentecost, and when he had reached Miletus, he summoned the elders of the church in Ephesus to join him and there he said to them: *“Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God **which He purchased with His own blood**”* (Acts 20:28).

What does Paul mean; that God has purchased us with His own blood? In his second letter to the Corinthians (5:19), Paul explains: *‘God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself...’* The word *‘Reconcile’* means: *‘To mend a broken relationship’*. This is what God had planned should happen, when His Son, the Lord Jesus, was crucified and He died.

To help explain this New Blood Covenant, Dr. E. W. Kenyon has said in his booklet, 'THE BLOOD COVENANT',

The blood of Jesus cleanses, instead of merely covering. The first covenant did not take away sin, it merely covered it. It did not give eternal life, or the new birth. It gave a promise of it. It did not give fellowship with God. It gave a type of it.

God's New Covenant with mankind, to grant us forgiveness for our sin, sealed by blood when Jesus died on the cross, Jesus being the Word/Wisdom/Son of God, is the second Pillar of Wisdom: ***'She has mixed her wine'***.

## THE THIRD DAY, THE FEAST OF FIRSTFRUITS, THE THIRD PILLAR OF WISDOM

*‘Then God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear”; and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said. “Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth”; and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according its kind. And God saw that it was good. So the evening and the morning were the third day’ (Genesis 1:9–13).*

For botanists, this historical record in the Genesis account of Creation about the seas and the earth, and plants producing seed and fruit on the third day before the Sun and the Moon make their appearance a day later to control the Earth’s seasons, may seem suspect. How can plants produce seed and fruit if there are no seasons?

But this is not impossible, not if after His death, Jesus was placed in a garden tomb (like a seed, John 19:41–42), then three days later, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene when *‘His countenance was like lightning and His clothing as white as snow’* (Matthew 28:3), then over a period of the next forty days, He appeared to all of His disciples.

In Hebrew, the number *‘Three’* is recognised as the number which represents resurrection, and confirms why it was necessary for Jesus to remain in the tomb for three days.

Many (both then and today) see the resurrection of the dead as being something that is unattainable. However, as Jesus said to Martha: *"I am the resurrection and the life, He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live"* (John 11:25).

Later, Jesus said to His disciples, *"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing"* (John 15:5). Was Jesus, in a covert way, recalling the grass, the herbs and the fruit trees as bearing seed and fruit on the third day, which are first reported on in Genesis 1:11? When Jesus spoke about His resurrection and of His disciples as bearing fruit (people), both events recalled the third day.

Jesus also said to His disciples: *"Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!"* (John 4:35). Here, Jesus was not speaking about plants and trees, but of those who needed to hear His 'Good News', which was to include that after His three-and-a-half years of ministry, He would die. However, after three days and three nights, He would appear again.

It was on the third day of the first seven days that the first signs of seed and fruit appeared. This was repeated by the timing of the resurrection of Jesus, which took place, most likely, at the timing of the third Hebrew festival, the feast of Firstfruits (that is first described in Genesis 1:11–13).

Earlier in Israel's history, when the children of Israel were waiting to enter the Promised Land, God told Moses how he was to instruct the people to give thanks for what would be the first of their three seasonal harvests, the barley harvest. Having grown up on a farm, I witnessed that the timing of a harvest can vary as a result of when the seed was sown, followed by the growing conditions – especially the Sun and

the rains. This is why in God's instructions for the festival of Firstfruits (unlike Passover and the festival of Unleavened Bread), no date is given. Instead, the festival of Firstfruits was always to be held on the first day of the week – the day in the week when Jesus rose from the dead.

God's instruction for the keeping of the festival of Firstfruits is clear: *'And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; **on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.**" [i.e., the festival of Firstfruits was always meant to take place on the first day of the week]. "And you shall offer on that day, when you wave the sheaf, a male lamb of the first year, without blemish, as a burnt offering to the LORD"' (Leviticus 23:9–12).*

Here there can be no misunderstanding; on whichever day of the week the Barley harvest commenced – and it would not have been on a Sabbath – the death of a male lamb without blemish and the giving of thanks to God, did not take place until the first day of the week after the next weekly Sabbath.

From this instruction, acknowledging and thanking God for His provision, the first day of the week was the most appropriate day for Jesus to rise from the dead. And Paul the apostle had something to say concerning this. *'But now is Christ risen from the dead and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep'* (1 Corinthians 15:20).

During His life and in His teaching, Jesus also indicated that the third day had been set-aside for His resurrection. Jesus said to the scribes and to the Pharisees: *"For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish; so will*

*the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth*" (Matthew 12:40). It was on the third day that God gathered the Seas, next the dry land (the Earth). It was the same period of days (three), the same elements (the Seas and the Earth), and the same sequence that Jonah was in the Sea and Jesus was buried (as with a seed) in the Earth.

In his commentary on the book of Genesis, 'GLEANINGS IN GENESIS', Arthur Walkington Pink (1886–1952), writes:

In the third day's work our Lord's resurrection is typically set forth. Thus it is in our type. Beyond doubt, that which is foreshadowed on the third day's work is resurrection. It is in the record concerning this third day's work that we read "*Let the dry land appear*" [Verse 9].

Previously the earth had been submerged, buried beneath the waters. But now the land is raised above the level of the seas; there is resurrection, the earth appears. But this is not all. In verse 11 (Genesis 1:11) we read, "*And let the earth bring forth grass*", etc. Hitherto death had reigned supreme. No life appeared upon the surface of the ruined earth. But on the third day the earth is commanded to "*bring forth.*"

Not on the second, not on the fourth, but on the third day was life seen upon the barren earth! Perfect is the type for all who have eyes to see. Wonderfully pregnant are the words, "*Let the earth bring forth*" to all who have ears to hear. It was on the third day that our Lord rose again from the dead '*according to the Scriptures*'. According to what Scriptures?

Do we not have in these 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> verses of Genesis 1, the first of these Scriptures... the primitive picture of our Lord's resurrection?



Given that one of the leading and most influential Christian protagonists of the first half of the twentieth century should have identified the relationship between the third day of Creation and the resurrection of Jesus, surely alerts us to what has been for many, the key to their faith. Never again when reading of what took place on the third day will I fail to connect it to the rising from death of the Lord Jesus.

Luke records that it was three days after Jesus had died and as He was sitting at a table with two of his disciples in the village of Emmaus, that He made Himself known to them. *'Now it came to pass, as He sat at the **table** with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight. And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?"* (Luke 24:30–31).

The same evening Jesus again appeared to His disciples, but this time it was in Jerusalem. *'Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the **table**; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen'* (Mark 16:14). He then showed His disciples the nail marks in His two hands and His feet. In Hebrew the word for *'Friend'* means literally *'Two Hands'*.

Wisdom's third Pillar – *'**She has also furnished her table***' (Proverbs 9:2) – is an indicator of the timing for when Jesus was to rise from the dead, confirmed in the two Firstfruit meals that Jesus shared with His disciples (both at tables).

In Malachi 1:11–13, we read about certain priests who had profaned the LORD's name and then sneered at His table and His provision. They said: *"The table of the LORD is defiled".* They neither respected His table nor His provision. The *'LORD's Table'* speaks to us of God's Son, the Lord Jesus.

A table is, and always will be, the most important item of furniture in any home, for it is where family members can gather together and spend quality time with each other, and also with their friends and other guests.

When the disciples of Jesus were arguing as to who was the greatest among them, Jesus explained that the greatest was the one who was prepared to serve others, and that if they did so, they would be able to sit, eat and drink at ***“My table in My kingdom”*** as His wedding guests (Luke 22:24–30).

For some, after such a bruising and humiliating death, His resurrection after three days may be difficult to believe in. Perhaps as hard as it is to believe that plants and trees could produce seed and fruit on the third day before the Sun and the Moon appeared the following day to establish the Earth’s seasons? The apostle Paul knew of this conundrum, and so he addressed this issue about Jesus rising from the dead in his first letter to the new believers in the city of Corinth.

Paul explains why he believed Jesus had risen from the dead. In fact Paul staked his reputation on his belief. *‘Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection from the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up – if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!’* (1 Corinthians 15:12–17).

Paul (before his conversion he was known as Saul) knew for certain that Jesus had risen from the dead for he had encountered Him on the road to Damascus when Jesus

appeared and spoke to him (Acts 9:3–4). Later, after his arrest in Jerusalem, Paul testified to the Roman commander of Jerusalem about how he had come to faith in Jesus by describing how Jesus had appeared to him: “...suddenly a great light from heaven shone around me” (Acts 22:6).

For Paul, when blinded by the ‘great light’ (a reminder of the great light on the first day?), and hearing Jesus speaking to him saying: “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”, it had been sufficient to convince Paul that the dead can rise.

Continuing in his first letter to the believers in Corinth, Paul then adds to what he has now said by describing his own expectation of rising from death, and linking this to Jesus’ resurrection. Paul writes: *‘If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man [Adam] came death, by Man [the ‘Son of Man’, the Lord Jesus] also came the resurrection of the dead’* (1 Corinthians 15:19–21).

Regarding the hope of our being resurrected from death, the writer of Hebrews has a rational way of describing faith. *‘Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen’* (Hebrews 11:1). The writer then provides a list of names of some who had been faithful to God and what they had experienced. Having identified a few of God’s faithful witnesses, the writer then goes on to say: *‘Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourging, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented – of whom the world was not worthy’* (Hebrews 11:35–38).

For these people *'of whom the world was not worthy'*, it was because they had overcome any fear of death by their faith. For these ordinary people who became extraordinary people, they knew from their own experience the lesson which Jesus had taught prior to His own death at Calvary. *"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain"* (John 12:24).

The willingness of believers in Jesus to die and yet live, is a reminder of how God once addressed the children of Israel concerning His promise of granting them victory over death. *"I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. O Death, I will be your plagues! O Grave I will be your destruction!"* (Hosea 13:14).

Having been ransomed and redeemed from death, and thus destruction, the next step – after we have left this life – will be to join the Lord Jesus at His wedding table.

Wisdom has already provided for the table's provision. We do not have to do a thing – except to show gratitude and say "Yes" to Wisdom's invitation by inviting Jesus, the Master Craftsman, into our lives.

Lady Wisdom: ***'She has also furnished her table'*** (Proverbs 9:2c).

## THE FOURTH DAY, THE FEAST OF WEEKS, THE FOURTH PILLAR OF WISDOM

*“Then God said, “Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth”; and it was so.’*

*“Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. So the evening and the morning were the fourth day’ (Genesis 1:14–19).*

It is the Sun which gives us light and heat during the day, the Moon that gives light and beauty at night, and the tilt of the Earth from its vertical axis by twenty-three degrees by which God has given to us the four seasons. And it is from the four seasons that we derive our harvests and from the harvests we obtain our food. If this order did not exist, the majority of the world’s annual harvests could not take place.

Jesus taught: *“The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come” (Mark 4:26–29).* Regarding the sickle and the harvest, see Revelation 14:14–16.

Jesus said the Kingdom of God is like a harvest field, and the Earth's harvests are only made possible by the positions of the Sun and the Moon in their correlation with the Earth; the Sun and the Moon not appearing until the fourth day.

The fourth festival – Feast of Weeks – is when Jewish people celebrate their wheat harvest (Exodus 34:22). It was also at this time Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to His disciples, for them to become His servants in the world that He (together with His Father and the Holy Spirit) had created (Hebrews 1:2). Jesus said to His disciples: *“The harvest is truly plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest”* (Matthew 9:37–38).

The Jewish celebration of the Feast of Weeks is observed seven weeks and one day (fifty days) after the people have celebrated the Feast of Firstfruits. In Hebrew this festival is called Shavuot. In Greek it is called Pentecost.

When the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, about one hundred and twenty of them were gathered in the city of Jerusalem (Acts 1:15). When King Solomon dedicated the first Temple in Jerusalem, one hundred and twenty priests sounded their trumpets and, *‘...praised the LORD saying: “For He is good, for His mercy endures forever”*. It was then that, *‘...the house of the LORD was filled with a cloud’* (2 Chronicles 5:13). This cloud – the supernatural power of God which filled the house of God in Jerusalem in the days of Solomon – was not unlike the rushing mighty wind which filled the place where the disciples were gathered, and in the same city, Jerusalem.

Included in his speech to a crowd of Jewish people on the day of Pentecost, Peter quoted from the book of the prophet Joel about what he and the other disciples had just recently experienced. *“But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:*

*'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh...' "*(Acts 2:16–17). Continuing, Peter said: *"I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved"* (Acts 2:19–21). Is it not striking that Peter chose Joel's prophecy, which includes a reference to the Sun and the Moon, for his first sermon on the Day of Pentecost?

Although Joel's prophecy refers to the Sun being darkened – as happened when Jesus died – and the Moon being turned into blood – as happened when the appearance (face) of Jesus was marred with His blood – earlier in this prophecy Joel refers to: *"The threshing floors will be full of wheat and the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil"* (Joel 2:24). Joel's prophecy links Israel's wheat harvest to the Sun and the Moon, which, according to the biblical record in Genesis 1:14, their initial purpose was: ***"let them be for signs..."*** The clearest signs are the eight long-term effects that the Sun and the Moon have upon the Earth. In Hebrew, eight is the number for *'Superabundant Fertility'*.

Following the Great Flood which nearly destroyed the Earth – yet Noah plus seven other persons were saved – God said:

<i>"While the earth remains,</i>	
<i>Seedtime and Harvest,</i>	(1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> signs)
<i>Cold and Heat,</i>	(3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> signs)
<i>Winter and Summer,</i>	(5 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup> signs)
<i>And Day and Night,</i>	(7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup> signs)
<i>Shall not cease."</i>	(Genesis 8:22)

To His disciples Jesus said: *"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized*

*will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned*" (Mark 16:15–16). However, He told them to wait until they had received the Holy Spirit. Jesus said to them: *"Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high"* (Luke 24:49). Having waited, Peter then invited his fellow Jews to attend Jesus' wedding supper.

The invitations to the Jewish people are represented by the fourth Pillar of Wisdom. ***'She has sent out her maidens, she cries out from the highest places of the city, "Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!"'*** (Proverbs 9:3–4).

Is this city Jerusalem? It certainly appears so, for Wisdom's messenger (the Holy Spirit) links Jerusalem to where:

1. God chose this city in which to place His name. *"Yet I have chosen Jerusalem that My name may be there..."* (2 Chronicles 6:6). Jerusalem belongs to God.
2. Jesus' disciples, who were Jews, were filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Feast of Weeks).
3. After Peter had preached the Gospel to Jews only, approximately 3,000 of them came to faith in Jesus and acknowledged Him as their Messiah (Acts 2:41).

In Hebrew, the gender for 'Wisdom' and for the 'Holy Spirit' – and for those who will attend Jesus' marriage supper – *is female*. For the Bridegroom, we read in Isaiah 54:5, *"For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is His name..."*

Before we consider the fifth day and the other guests, those from the Gentile nations, it is important to reflect on why the Jewish people were chosen first. It concerns the Master Craftsman and what He had always intended. i.e., His Plan.



In Matthew 10:5–7, Jesus said to His disciples: *“Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the **lost sheep** of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ ”* Why did Jesus say to His disciples they were to preach the Gospel to Jewish people, but not to the Gentiles?

During His ministry, Jesus was once confronted by a woman from Canaan who pleaded with Him to have mercy on her demon-possessed daughter. At first Jesus refused to speak to her! Only when His disciples had urged Him to: *“Send her away...”* because they saw her as a nuisance (to them), did Jesus finally speak to the lady. Jesus said to her: *“I was not sent except to the **lost sheep** of the house of Israel.”* Yet although the lady worshipped Him and was very persistent, Jesus still refused to grant her what she had asked Him for.

Jesus said to her: *“It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the little dogs.”* Not until the lady reminded Jesus that even the little dogs were entitled to a few crumbs which fell from their master’s table (a reminder of the importance of a table?), did Jesus grant her, her request – because she had *‘great faith’* (Matthew 15:21–28).

The question is: *“If Jesus was so focussed on reaching out to people, why was He not willing to consider the plight of this non-Jewish lady?”* Could it be that at the time it was because of the fallen state of the Jewish people, that many of them, according to the prophet Jeremiah, had strayed so far from God that they had forgotten all that God had done for them?

Jeremiah 50:6–7. In this prophecy, it is God who is speaking. *“My people have been **lost sheep**. Their shepherds have led them astray; they have turned them away on the mountains. They have gone from mountain to hill; they have forgotten their resting place. All who have found them have devoured*

*them; and their adversaries said, 'We have not offended, because they have sinned against the LORD, the habitation of justice, the LORD, the hope of their fathers.'*

In Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome, we read that Paul addresses this issue of the Gospel being preached first to the **lost sheep** of Israel – then later to the Gentile nations. Paul wrote: *"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also the Greek"* [the Gentiles]. (Romans 1:16).

Following Paul's conversion to faith in Jesus, one of his most powerful sermons was delivered in a synagogue in Antioch, and a small number of Jews who were present, believed. However, many of the Gentiles who were also present, begged Paul to share with them at the meeting on the next Sabbath, Paul's 'Good News' about Jesus.

A week later, when nearly everyone in city came together to hear Paul, the Jews were filled with envy and turned against Paul, accusing him of blasphemy. Paul then grew bold and said to them: *"It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first [the Jews being the fourth Pillar]; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold we turn to the Gentiles"* (Acts 13:44–46).

This, of course, was what Jesus had originally intended for Paul, when He appeared to him on the road to Damascus – for as He said to Ananias before he went to lay his hands on Paul that he might receive his sight, Jesus said to him: *"Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before the Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel"* (Acts 9:15).

However, did Paul ever give up on his fellow Jews coming to faith in Jesus? No, of course not. Having stated irrevocably that the Gospel was to be preached first to the Jewish people,

further on in his letter to the believers in Rome, Paul says that God will never abandon the Jews in favour of the Gentiles. Paul's question was: *"I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not!* (Romans 11:1).

Paul reinforces his belief that Jewish people will eventually come to faith in Jesus by saying: *'God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew'* (Romans 11:2).

In Romans chapters nine, ten and eleven, Paul explains that although at the time only a few Jewish people had believed and received Jesus as their Messiah (Saviour), nevertheless, a day would dawn when Jewish people would be grafted back into the cultivated olive tree – an analogy of the Kingdom of God. Gentile Christians, therefore, should not assume that Jewish people have been rejected by God in favour of themselves.

Paul continues his teaching by explaining his insight into the destiny of the Jewish people by stating: *'For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel [the Jewish people] until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliver will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins"'* (Romans 11:25–27). Paul was quoting from Isaiah 59:20–21.

If Paul had chosen to, he could have included a promise God made with His servant Hosea. To begin with, however, God told Hosea to marry Gomer, a prostitute, as a lesson of how God's people had disobeyed God by committing harlotry, *"...by departing from the LORD"* (Hosea 1:1–3). But God, who cherished the children of Israel – mainly because of His covenant promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that their

descendants would be His people and He would be their God – said to them through the prophet: *“I will betroth you to Me forever; yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, in loving-kindness and mercy; I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, and you shall know the LORD”* (Hosea 2:19–20). Notice in these verses God’s triple-lock promise to the children of Israel of when He says: **“I will”**. God has not abandoned or changed His mind about His ancient people.

In Deuteronomy, there is recorded a guarantee that God will never turn His back on the Jewish people. This is what God has said concerning His ancient people, Israel.

*“For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments”* (Deuteronomy 7:6–9).

It is because God is a keeper of His covenants and shows mercy to those who love Him and keep His commandments, that God has never given-up on the Jewish people, despite the fact that throughout history, only a remnant have been faithful to Him. Therefore, because of God’s faithfulness, His love for the Jewish people means they are the focus of the fourth Pillar of Wisdom. ***‘She has sent out her maidens, she cries out from the highest places of the city, “Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!”’*** (Proverbs 9:3–4).

## THE FIFTH DAY, THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS, THE FIFTH PILLAR OF WISDOM

*“Then God said: “Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens.” So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” So the evening and the morning were the fifth day’ (Genesis 1:20–23).*

The fifth Jewish festival, the Feast of Trumpets, is observed in the Lunar Calendar on the first day of the seventh month. This day includes: *“...at the beginning of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; and they shall be a memorial for you before your God: I am the LORD your God”* (Numbers 10:10). From a Hebrew perspective, five is the number for Grace: God’s Goodness and His Mercy.

Jewish tradition believes that the Feast of Trumpets was the time when Abraham took his son Isaac to Mount Moriah (The site where Jesus died), and there Abraham took the wood which he had prepared and placed on the back of Isaac – as a wooden cross would be prepared and placed on the back of Jesus – to make an altar on which he was to offer up his son to God. As Abraham was about to slay Isaac, the angel of the LORD intervened and told Abraham not to kill his son. It was then that, *‘...Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its*

*horns. So Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son' (Genesis 22:13).*

At the Feast of Trumpets, the trumpet reminds us that if we honour God, as Abraham did, our spirit/soul will be saved from death. In today's terms – as Isaac was spared – it means being spared from the consequences of our sin.

God's command on the fifth day to the sea creatures to fill the seas and to the birds to fill the earth by multiplying, was mirrored *precisely* in the last command Jesus gave to His disciples: *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations [Gentile nations], baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"* (Matthew 28:19).

At the time the disciples received the Holy Spirit (Feast of Weeks), they were in Jerusalem, and from there they went out and preached the Gospel to the Jews. Some-time later, as Peter was resting on the roof of a house in Joppa (Joppa means *'Beauty'*), he had a vision and a voice spoke to him. The inference of what Peter heard was it was now time for him, a Jew, to go to the Gentiles. The next day Peter went to Caesarea in ***Samaria***, to the home of Cornelius, a Centurion of the Italian Regiment, and preached the Gospel to Gentiles.

While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who listened to him (Acts 10:1–48). What Peter and the six other Jews who had travelled with him saw and heard – *'For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God'* (Acts 10:46) – mirrored the fifth day and the fifth Jewish feast, the Feast of Trumpets, as Peter obeyed what Jesus had said: *"...you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and **Samaria**, and to the end of the earth"* (Acts 1:8).

The reason for this sequence can to be found in John's Revelation, chapter 14 verses 6–7. *'Then I saw another angel*

*flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth – to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people – saying with a loud voice [like the sound of a trumpet], “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water.” ’ N.B., “To every nation”.*

Proverbs fifth Pillar of Wisdom (9:4) – ***‘As for him who lacks understanding...’*** – indicates that a new list of guests, those who previously had no knowledge of God’s mercy, are now invited to attend the Master Craftsman’s wedding banquet.

This Pillar equates to the Gentiles, who by their earlier exclusion had not known God (but as with Cornelius and the other Gentiles of his household who welcomed Peter into his home to hear the Gospel), are now included by being invited to join the first invited guests, Jewish people who have come to faith in Jesus, to attend His marriage supper.

Like Peter, the apostle Paul also came to acknowledge it was God’s intention for the Gentiles to be invited to become with the Jewish people, the Bride of Christ.

Paul wrote: *“Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh ... that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity ... so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity’* (Ephesians 2:11–16). See also Galatians 2:1–10.

The word 'Peace' Paul uses in this passage is the Hebrew word 'Shalom', and has nothing to do with the cessation of hostilities, but instead has a number of meanings; such as 'Wholeness' or 'Completeness'. Shalom is a term that is used to enquire about a person's state of health, or well-being.

When John was told of those who would be attending the marriage supper of the Master Craftsman – unknown to John, this promise was to be included in the last book of the Bible – John was informed: *"Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!"* (Revelation 19:9).

For all who have been drawn to God by the work of the Holy Spirit, now including Gentiles as well as Jews, when Isaiah wrote about Jesus, he wrote: *'And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the **Gentiles** shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious'* (Isaiah 11:10). Then later in Isaiah we read: *"Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the **Gentiles** ... as a light to the **Gentiles**, to open blind eyes..."* (Isaiah 42:1 & 6).

## ANTI-SEMITISM

Before we leave the fifth day, the fifth Jewish festival, the Feast of Trumpets, and the fifth Pillar of Wisdom, it may be helpful if we spend a little time examining why over so very many years there have been such deep divisions between Jews and Gentiles, sometimes in the form of anti-Jewishness – that is their religious practices – and in anti-Semitism.

It is clear the Gospel was preached firstly to Jewish people. Only later were Gentiles included in what God had planned. So why has anti-Semitism arisen and become such a heinous crime? The divisions in faith and practice between Jews and



Gentiles became apparent early on, which is why Paul addresses this issue more than once in his various letters to Gentile believers. However, it would be approximately three hundred years – after the death and resurrection of Jesus – before these divisions became a chasm; one which has been extremely hard to rectify.

The main occurrence of the divisions between Jews and Gentiles took place after the Roman Emperor, Constantine, adopted the Christian faith for himself and his Empire (312 C.E.). From this time onwards, Jewish people living in the Roman Empire were treated as second class citizens. Anti-Semitism is not a recent phenomenon. The way these divisions were first implemented was to abandon some of the customs which were the hallmarks of the Jewish people and the teaching of Scripture.

One example will help to explain such divisions. It relates to when Jesus died. Jesus did not die on a Friday (neither was He born on December 25<sup>th</sup>). It is impossible to fit in three days and three nights from a Friday afternoon to a Sunday morning – the first day of the week. According to Scripture, Jesus died on the eve of the festival of Passover (Matthew 26:5 & John 13:1). The day Jesus died was not tied to a particular day in the week, such as a Friday, but to a date in the Jewish people's first Lunar month, the day before Passover (when as always at Passover, there is a full Moon). This is confirmed in the following account. *'Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away'* (John 19:31).

The '*Preparation Day*' for the Sabbath which the Jewish leaders referred to, was not the sixth day of the week, a Friday, but rather the evening prior to the day of their

Passover celebration – the day when God had passed-over Egypt to set His people free on the fifteenth day. This day was, “...*a Holy convocation, you shall do no customary work on it*” (Leviticus 23:7). In other words, Passover was (and still is) observed as a Sabbath, but it was not the Jewish people’s weekly Sabbath.

Historically, the Jewish people’s seven annual Appointed Times have been observed as Sabbaths. This explains why it was important for Jesus to have died on the fourteenth day of the first Hebrew month in their Lunar Calendar – the same day/date that the Passover lambs had died in Egypt.

These differences between Jews and Gentiles have existed since the fourth century, and have resulted in Jews being ostracised by non-Jews. This problem is also heightened because of the teaching in some churches that the Church (the Gentile Church) has replaced the Jewish people. This belief is sometimes referred to as ‘*Replacement Theology*’.

For those who have believed and followed this teaching, they will have missed what the Bible says about the Jewish people; that one day they will be grafted back into what is the natural olive tree. Paul wrote: ‘*And they also [the Jewish people], if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again*’ (Romans 11:23).

God has neither rejected nor abandoned the Jewish people in preference of the Gentiles, but in keeping to the Master Craftsman’s plan, God has every intention of bringing as many Jewish people as possible to a saving knowledge of Himself through His Son’s sacrificial death; who, as John the Baptist once described Jesus as He approached him: “*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*” (John 1:29). The ‘*Sin of the World*’ pertains to both Jews and to Gentiles. Nobody is excluded, for we have all sinned.

Having observed the first five days of Creation, we come now to God's final acts on the sixth day. The first five days have provided us with a summary of (1), How light overcomes darkness. (2), How righteousness overcomes sin and death. (3), How the appearance of the Sun and Moon foreshadows Jesus' resurrection. (4), How God's choosing of the Jewish people is that they might be the first to hear the Gospel. (5), How the Gentiles are then included in God's plan.

Basically, what we have seen so far, is an account of God's wisdom in Creation and His parallel act of redeeming love. This brings us to the incarnation of the One who would bring about God's plan: The Master Craftsman par excellence.

C. G. Bartholomew and R. P. O'Dowd – who I quoted earlier – have something important to say in their chapter, *'Jesus, the Wisdom of God'*, and their conclusion of *'Wisdom'*. Readers may find this helpful as an introduction to the sixth day.

The incarnation [birth of Jesus] signals a dramatic shift in the storyline of the Bible. Wisdom in the Old Testament focuses on the created order, what can be called God's structure for the world. But it does not give attention to the overarching direction of the creation – how the world will move from creation to fall and back to a redeemed new creation again. Wisdom in the New Testament affirms the creation order of the Old Testament, but it focuses it historically in the mystery of God's purposes bound up in Jesus, the agent who saves creation and leads it to the destiny God always intended for it. In Christ, God Himself has taken on the human role of redemption and blessing previously assigned to Israel, and then given it back not just to Israel, but also to all the nations and peoples of the world. Wisdom then embodies the new, radical way for us to live in God's world and play our role in proclaiming and conforming to His kingship.

Therefore, as Bartholomew and O'Dowd have explained, that Creation and redemption are together bound up in Jesus, and having now prepared the food and the wine for His wedding supper, then furnished the table and invited the first guests, Jewish people – ***'She has sent out her maidens, she cries out from the highest places of the city, "Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!"*** – then having issued a similar invitation to the Gentiles – ***'As for him who lacks understanding, she says to him...'*** – we come now to the sixth day and the provision of the meal which has been prepared for the guests, both Jews and Gentiles, those who have believed in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus and have received Him into their lives.

## THE SIXTH DAY, THE DAY OF ATONEMENT, THE SIXTH PILLAR OF WISDOM

*“Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, each according to its kind;” and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them’ (Genesis 1:24–27).*

*“Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day’ (Genesis 1:31).*

The sixth day is God’s *pièce de-résistance*; the creation of the animals and the configuring of mankind. But notice what the text says in Genesis 1:26: *“Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.”* The Hebrew word for God that is used in the first account of Creation is a plural noun, and is a reference to God the Father, Jesus His Son, and the Holy Spirit, for the three were together involved in their work of Creation. In the second account of Creation, Genesis 2:4–25, the Hebrew term, *‘LORD God’*, is a singular noun.

The Hebrew name that is used in the first account of Creation (Genesis 1:1–2:3) is *‘ELOHIM’*, which is a plural noun. i.e., The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The Hebrew name that is used in the second account of Creation is 'ADONAI', which is singular. Additionally, there are other things mentioned in the second account which are missing in the first account. For example, the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil; and the Fall of Man and the Serpent; these are not mentioned. And there is something else mentioned in the second account of Creation which does not appear in the first account.

In the second account it says that Adam was made from dust, which may be problematical for some readers. However, in Bill Bryson's book, 'THE BODY – A GUIDE FOR OCCUPENTS', and in his first chapter, '*How to build a human*', Bryson explains:

You could call together all the brainiest people who are alive now or have ever lived and endow them with the complete sum of human knowledge [wisdom], and they could not between them make a single living cell. That is unquestionably the most astounding thing about us – that we are just a collection of inert components, the same stuff you would find in a pile of dirt.

Possibly, without realising it, Bryson confirms the accuracy of the Bible, that: '*...the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground*' (Genesis 2:7). See FOOTNOTE, page 36.

The much respected theologian and prolific writer, John Metcalfe, in His book 'CREATION' and in his assessment of the first chapter of Genesis, points out:

On opening the book of Genesis, perhaps the most remarkable feature to strike the reader is that there are two records of the Creation, not one. These differ immensely, not only in emphasis and direction but also in volume and form. The reason is spiritual, and no one can attain to the understanding of the Creation without that

spiritual knowledge. ***For the truth is that hidden in the records of Creation, lies the revelation of Jesus Christ,*** quite apart from the record of Adam. (Emphasis added).

Although Metcalfe's assessment of Creation may be new to those who have not read his book, might this mean that Jesus is concealed in the Bible's first account of Creation? If this is correct, then is it not unreasonable that a day would come when He would visit the Earth in the likeness of His Father, to solve the problem of man's separation from God?

But before Jesus appeared – and since He appeared – there has existed in most of us an awareness of who God is. In Biblical terms this is known as '*Common Grace*' – as opposed to '*Saving Grace*'. Common Grace is the consciousness in men and women of the dividing line between good and evil, for which we have a choice, and which has been endorsed upon our consciences, not by evolution, but by God.

Paul wrote about Common Grace in his letter to the Romans. *'For when Gentiles, who do not have the law [the Scriptures], by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them'* (Romans 2:14–15).

On the occasion when Jesus spoke to a large group of Jewish people, He explained His plan (Saving Grace) and how His life would come to an end. Luke records what Jesus said. *"And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."* Jesus continued by explaining what was involved in His plan, and His resolve to press ahead with it. *"For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first to count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it – lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish,*

*all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish' "* (Luke 14:27-30). Jesus, having counted the cost in Gethsemane, then arrested, was mocked by those who rejected Him. Later, as Jesus was dying, they said sneeringly: *"He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, **the chosen of God**"* (Luke 23:35).

Saving Grace is what took place when Adam and Eve who had sinned, were clothed with tunics made from animal skins. However, animal skins and sacrifices only provided a covering for sin – not a solution. Therefore, this was to be followed by what the prophet Micah was told to write; that from Bethlehem, *"...shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel"* (Micah 5:2). This is why an angel said to Joseph concerning Mary his fiancée: *"And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins"* (Matthew 1:21).

The birth of Jesus is described in one of Isaiah's prophecies. In Isaiah chapter 49:1 we read: *"Listen, O coastlands, to Me, and take heed, you peoples from afar! The LORD has called Me from the womb; from the matrix of My mother He has made mention of My name."* As Israel's Tabernacle was made for worship and the Holy-of-Holies was its inner sanctuary; so, too, Mary's womb, her inner sanctuary, was made for God's Son. Of course, at the time, pregnancy scans were unheard of, but Joseph, a master carpenter, who was called to act as a father in the Father's place, was told both the gender and the name of Mary's child while He was still in Mary's womb.

Isaiah's prophecy continues: *"And now the LORD says, who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, to bring Jacob back to Him, so that Israel [the Jewish people, the fourth Pillar] is gathered to Him" (Verse 5). "I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles [the fifth Pillar], that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth" (Verse 6). And in Psalm*



22:9–10 we read: *'But You are He who took Me out of the womb; You made Me trust while on My mother's breasts. I was cast upon You from birth. From My mother's womb You have been My God.'* And in Psalm 2:7. *"You are My Son, today I have begotten You."* Quite literally: *"You are My Son, today I became Your Father"*. Psalm 2:7 is quoted twice in Hebrews where the emphasis is on Jesus as being our High Priest.

These historical pronouncements lead us to ponder why the making of male and female was delayed until the sixth day. Why, for example, did God reserve for the sixth day, His most outstanding achievement, rather than on one of the other days, such as the first day?

That male and female were reserved for the sixth day, lead us to ask: *"Why is the Day of Atonement, the Sixth Appointed Time in the Hebrew calendar – 'Yom Kippur' – described in the Bible as a 'Most Holy Day', in the same way as the sixth day is described as being very good?"* If there is a significantly held spiritual reason for this sixth Appointed Time, is it because there is irrefutable reasoning which may be connected to these two events – the making of a male (and female) on the sixth day, and the birth Jesus on the Day of Atonement? Are these two events in God's calendar, in any way connected?

The reason for this suggestion is because Jesus was always destined to become our High Priest, and to take the place of Aaron who had been appointed to serve in the Tabernacle's Holy-of-Holies on the Day of Atonement. This is why the sixth day and the Day of Atonement are inseparable.

When the LORD spoke to Moses and told him how Aaron his brother was to approach God in the Holy-of-Holies in the Tabernacle (remember, the Tabernacle had been designed by God), He said to Moses: *"Tell Aaron your brother not to come **at just any time** into the Holy Place inside the veil,*

*before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud above the mercy seat” (Leviticus 16:2).*

From God’s instructions to Moses (passed on by Moses to his brother Aaron), it was essential for Aaron to obey God. Not to have done so, and Aaron would have died. So why was it necessary for Aaron to keep to the order given by God for the keeping of the Day of Atonement?

It was because this ‘Day’ was always going to be a part of God’s plan for His Son (Saving Grace), and so the foretelling of His birth, the time when Jesus entered this world in the innocence of a new-born child – hinted at already in Genesis 1:26 – is to be found in the Scriptures Jesus so often referred to: In the writings of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.

In Margaret Barker’s book, ‘CHRISTMAS THE ORIGINAL STORY’, Barker refers to Philo who saw the two accounts of Creation as being different. In Philo’s ‘ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION’, Philo describes how he understood Genesis.

Genesis 1:26 describes the heavenly Adam, made in the image and after the likeness of God. Genesis 2:7 describes the man formed from dust. There are two types of men; the one a heavenly man [the Lord Jesus], the other an earthly man [Adam].

Barker refers to basic Biblical and spiritual principles to explain how that the only day in the Hebrew calendar for which it would have been appropriate for Jesus to have been born, was on the ‘LORD’S DAY OF ATONEMENT’ and in the Temple’s Holy-of-Holies (first provided for in the Tabernacle made by Moses in the wilderness, followed by the first and second Jewish Temples in Jerusalem). Barker’s reasoning is that although the Holy-of-Holies was a purpose made location for the birth of Jesus to have taken place; however...

...*'no place in the inn'* could well have been an allusion, there being no Logos in the Holy-of-Holies. The Firstborn and the Glory, the Logos, was not born in the Holy-of-Holies and did not appear in His garments of Glory in Jerusalem. He was swaddled in a manger elsewhere. The expected in the unexpected.

Furthermore, after giving birth, the swaddling material Mary wrapped Jesus in, would have been of similar material to the white linen tunic Aaron would have clothed himself with before entering the Holy-of-Holies on the Day of Atonement.

In his letter to the Philippians, Paul refers to Jesus as being in *'the form of God'*, but also as Him being born as a man. Paul writes: *'...Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men [at His birth]. And being found in appearance as a man [by the shepherds and wise men], He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross'* (Philippians 2:5–8).

But does this mean that when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, He became less than God? No, of course not, *'For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily'* (Colossians 2:9).

To understand these connections (the sixth day, the Day of Atonement and the birth of Jesus) is to see there is also a fourth connection. The sixth Pillar of Wisdom clearly points to Jesus, for it is something that Christians have been doing for nearly two thousand years: ***"Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine I have mixed"*** (Proverbs 9:5). This mixing of wine (wine represents the blood of Jesus) is partly explained in what Jesus once said: *"I am in the Father and the Father in Me."* (John 14:10). Here we see Jesus describing Himself and His Father as being, effectively, conjoined.

My bread and the mixing of My wine looks back to when God told Moses how the children of Israel were to observe the Day of Atonement. First, a young bull – by its death and the shedding of its blood – was presented to God as an offering for Aaron and his family. Aaron then sprinkled some of the bull's blood on the Mercy Seat, the covering panel of the Ark of the Covenant. (The Ark of the Covenant was located in the Tabernacle's Holy-of-Holies).

Next, a goat was sacrificed as a sin offering for the people, and some of its blood was also sprinkled on the Mercy Seat, ***to mix with the blood of the young bull.*** This mixing of the blood from two animals (which is basic, yet also prophetic), was done to show how the bull's blood which Aaron offered as a token for himself as high priest, was to mix with the goat's blood which was slain for the sins of God's people.

Later, in the continuation of God's plan for both the children of Israel and the Gentile nations, this pattern of two bloods being mixed together – Jesus who was the Son of God, yet He was also human like ourselves – was repeated when Jesus died. And so for the Centurion who was a witness to the death of Jesus, and who was there to certify His death, said of Jesus after He had died: *"Truly this Man was the Son of God!"* (Mark 15:39). Thus without knowing the relevance of what he had said, the Centurion ascribed to the One who had died, that He was the Son of Man and Son of God in the one body.

## **SACRED EMBLEMS**

The reason for this mixing of blood is explained for us in the sixth Pillar of Wisdom; for this Pillar also anticipated the last meal Jesus officiated at when He took bread and wine. Regarding the bread Jesus said: *"This is My body which is given for you."* Of the wine Jesus said: *"This cup is the new covenant in My blood which is shed for you"* (Luke 22:19-20).

The first mention in the Bible of the sacred emblems of bread and wine was when Melchizedek, *'Priest of God Most High'*, prepared them as a meal for Abraham (Genesis 14:18). Bread and wine typify the body and the blood of Jesus.

Whenever bread and wine are consumed, although some will be absorbed in the mucous membrane, most of the absorption will pass through the wall of the small intestine to mix with the blood of the person eating the bread and drinking the wine. Although personally I do not believe in transubstantiation, I do have a good friend who does, and I consider my friend as a mature Christian. Thus we are able to be united, knowing that in the meal of Holy Communion we have discovered the lesson of how the life of Jesus is imparted to us. This is why in partaking of the meal of bread and wine, it has such a deep spiritual meaning.

The apostle Paul understood this spiritual meaning, and so he warned the Corinthian believers not to eat and drink without due respect and reverence. Paul wrote: *'Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body'* (1 Corinthians 11:27–29).

On the occasion of His birth, when Jesus was revealed as God's Son as a boy-child, was how Jesus entered this world through the veil between heaven and earth. At the end of His life, when Jesus died, the veil of the Temple was divided in two, from top to bottom, to show that there is no longer a need for a veil between mankind and God.

It is because of these two events – the birth and the death of Jesus – that we can have confidence in our access to the

throne-room of God, for as the writer of Hebrews has affirmed: *‘For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need’* (Hebrews 4:15–16).

The apostle John parallels Jesus as being in the image of God. *‘In the beginning was the Word [Jesus] and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God’* (John 1:1–2).

Concerning this statement, Tom Wright in his commentary on John’s gospel, writes:

John probably expects some readers to see that this opening passage says, about Jesus himself, what some writers had said about *‘Wisdom’*. Many Jewish teachers had grappled with the age-old questions: *“How can the one true God be both different from the world and active within the world? How can He be remote, holy and detached, and also intimately present?”*

The answer to these questions is in what Jesus said to His disciple Philip: *“He who has seen me has seen the Father. Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?”* (John 14:9–10)). Jesus also said to His disciples: *“I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father”* (John 16:28).

His words also confirm that Jesus, who had been formed in Mary’s womb, was revealed in the likeness of His Father. The reason was because Jesus had been appointed by His Father to become our High Priest, and for Him to enter this world through the veil which divides Heaven from Earth. The long-term effect of putting God’s plan into action has

been – and by this I mean the freeing up of our lives for God’s purposes – as Jesus once said: *“Therefore if the Son makes you free [free from our sin], you shall be free indeed”* (John 8:36). This is Saving Grace.

When it comes to Jesus taking on the role of intermediary, we receive more than a suggestion of this in a prophecy which is recorded in Isaiah chapter eleven, which is then explained in the New Testament book of Hebrews for which its central message is that Jesus is our High Priest.

Isaiah 11:1–5. *‘There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of His roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. His delight is in the fear of the LORD, and He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist.’*

What is included in this prophecy applied first to Aaron, who was appointed by God to serve the children of Israel, then to what Jesus was to accomplish. This included the clothing Aaron was told to wear as he served God and His people, and the one-piece garment Jesus was stripped of when He was being prepared for crucifixion.

In Israel’s ancient community, the role of the high priest was crucial, for his main responsibility was to act as the people’s intermediary before God. In doing so, he performed a range of duties so that the children of Israel might live as God’s people and be the recipients of His blessing and protection.

Included in Aaron's duties as high priest, was one which was of much greater importance than all his other tasks. On the Day of Atonement (on the tenth day of the seventh month), the high priest would not have worn his regular priestly robes; instead, he would have clothed himself in a one-piece linen garment before entering the Holy-of-Holies.

Aaron's observance was, of course, only transitory. A time would eventually come when God would send His beloved Son, the Lord Jesus, so that men and women would no longer be dependent on a priest who was restricted by his humanity – that is, until his death – when another priest would be appointed to succeed him. Jesus is this world's final High Priest (in Hebrew, Cohen Gadol), a High Priest who continues to be of service to mankind.

In Hebrews 9:11–12, we read: *'But Christ [Messiah] came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.'* (The word redemption in this passage confirms that as God's people we can be set-free, or redeemed eternally, from our sin).

This mention of goats and calves and of Jesus entering the *'Most Holy Place'*, refers to what would have taken place on the Day of Atonement, and not when the high priest carried out his other duties in the Tabernacle. In John's Revelation we read: *'Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple'* (Revelation 11:19). The Mosaic Ark of the Covenant was not an original, but was a facsimile of the Ark in Heaven as seen by John. Also, the Ark of the Covenant and the manger in which Mary placed her new-born Son, may have been made of the same material, acacia wood, and be of similar size and appearance.



## THE METHODOLOGY OF MIDRASH

Having been aware for many years of the importance of the Hebrew roots of our faith, about ten years ago, my wife and I decided to attend a seminar held in Manchester, England, which focussed on the Hebraic origins of Christianity. David Davis from the Mount Carmel fellowship in Israel was one of the speakers. Encouraged by his ministry, we purchased a copy of David's book 'THE ELIJAH LEGACY', and soon began to discover the hidden gems of the *'Methodology of Midrash'*. David explains the origin and purpose of Midrash.

There is an ancient Jewish concept of understanding Biblical prophecy called Midrash. The word comes from a root which means: *'To Search'*. Hebrew writers and commentators understood and applied four basic modes of interpretation to Scripture and biblical prophecy.

David then provides a brief explanation of the four modes of Scriptural interpretation behind Midrash.

**SIMPLE** – Plain, literal sense of the text.

**HINT** – A word, phrase, or some other element in the text that hints at things of which the writer was not aware, which is not conveyed by the *'Simple'* meaning.

**SEARCH** – An allegorical application of the text.

**SECRET** – A hidden meaning.

In his summary of Midrash, David explains:

Midrash is a Hebrew methodology of understanding prophecy. Prophecy is not only a specific or simple

prediction, but also contains '*Hints*' and a '*Search*' for deeper meaning. Sometimes there can be a '*Secret*' meaning. Therefore there are often multiple fulfilments [or layers] of a single prophecy.

An example of Midrash can be found in Leviticus 16:29–34, where a description is given for what was to take place on Israel's Day of Atonement. This passage explains how Aaron, who had been anointed and set-aside to minister as high priest in the Tabernacle, that it was here in the Holy-of-Holies that Aaron was to make an atonement for God's people, "*...in his father's place*" (Verse 32).

In this chapter, nothing is said about Aaron's father as being of any major significance. In fact, although Aaron's father was Amram, a Levite, who was married to his father's sister Jochebed, this is about all we know of Aaron's father – apart from the meaning of Amram's name (and Jochebed's and Aaron's names). Names can be significant, and this is why in Hebrew there is what is known as '*The Theology of Names*'. Biblical names often contain hidden truths or meanings. Briefly, the meaning of these three names is as follows.

**AARON** – means: '*High Mountain*'.

**AMRAM** – means: '*Exalted*'.

**JOCHEBED** – means: '*Yahweh is Glory*'.

One day, Jesus took three of His disciples, Peter, James and John, to a '*High Mountain*' (Aaron), where He was transfigured – '*Exalted*' (Amram) – before them as '*His face shone like the Sun, and His clothes became as white as the light*', surpassing the brightness of the garments worn by Aaron on the Day of Atonement. By being with Jesus, His three disciples witnessed a revealing of '*Yahweh's Glory*'

(Jochebed). Peter said to Jesus: *"Lord, it is good for us to be here."* While Peter was still speaking to Jesus, *'...a bright cloud overshadowed them'* and a voice came out of the cloud, saying: *"This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"* (Mathew 17:1-5).

When the instruction for Aaron to serve *'in his father's place'* was given, it is doubtful if his father was still alive. (Aaron was eighty three years old when he and his younger brother Moses had left Egypt. Numbers 33:38-39.). So who is this *'father'* who is referred to in Leviticus 16:32? Could this *'father'* be an allusion to the One true God, of whom Jesus said: *"He is My Father"*, who enabled Jesus to be formed in Mary's womb, then for Him to be made known first to Jewish people (Acts 3:26); then later to the Gentiles (Acts 11:18)?

The Day of Atonement as described in Leviticus chapter sixteen, is reminiscent of the time when Jesus acted on His Father's behalf in serving both Him and others; He who was born in Bethlehem in order to carry out His Father's will.

Matthew's genealogy of Jesus states that Jesus was not a member of Israel's priestly tribe, the tribe of Levi, from whom Aaron was a direct descendent, but He was from the tribe of Judah, and of David who became a King. The book of Hebrews explains why the priesthood needed to be changed – as the law of Moses needed to be changed – to provide a better and a more perfect priesthood (Hebrews 7:12-14).

## **THE FIFTIETH YEAR OF JUBILEE**

There is one further aspect of Israel's observance of the Day of Atonement which I need to explain, for there is a specific instruction given by God concerning the keeping of Israel's fiftieth year of Jubilee. In Leviticus chapter 25, we learn about Israel's Year of Jubilee, a time of consecration which

was to be observed throughout the land; a time which was to be accompanied with the blowing of trumpets.

To Moses, God said: *“Three times you shall keep a feast to Me in the year”* (Exodus 23:14). This was expanded later when God added: *“Three times in the year all your men shall appear before the Lord, the LORD God of Israel”* (Exodus 34:23). For the men of Israel, God’s instruction was that they were to make three annual pilgrimages to Jerusalem. These times – they are known as *‘Pilgrim Festivals’* – are the times when Jewish people give thanks for their three annual harvests.

The first harvest (Barley) is celebrated in the spring at the time of Passover/Unleavened Bread/Firstfruits. The second harvest (wheat) is celebrated at the time of the Feast of Weeks – fifty days after Firstfruits. The third harvest (fruits, nuts and berries) is celebrated at the Feast of Tabernacles which takes place at the close of the agricultural year.

So why do Jewish people not make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to give thanks on the Day of Atonement? Why is this time of holiness, self-denial and fasting, treated obscurely? And what is it about the fiftieth Year of Jubilee that is so special? It is because in the Year of Jubilee, the Day of Atonement was a time set-aside for the men (together with their wives and children) to return to the ancestral places of their families.

Known as the Year of Jubilee, it is a Sabbath celebration that is to be held in the year following a period of seven times of seven years (forty nine years of planting and harvesting), and is to be observed as a celebratory occasion.

God’s instruction for the Year of Jubilee is as follows: *‘And the LORD spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, saying, “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When you come into the land which I give you, then the land shall keep a sabbath to the*

*LORD. Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather its fruit; but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath to the LORD. You shall neither sow your field nor prune your vineyard” (Leviticus 25:1–4).*

In verses 5–7 of Leviticus chapter 25, God tells Moses what the people of Israel were to do in keeping each seventh year as a year of rest – a Sabbath Year. Having dealt with the preliminaries, His instructions continue:

*“And you shall count seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years; and the time of the seven sabbaths of years shall be to you forty-nine years. Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the **Day of Atonement** you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land. And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, **and each of you shall return to his family**” (Leviticus 25:8–10).*

When the Day of Atonement was observed in the Year of Jubilee, it clearly had a level of importance associated with it which was much greater than it had at other times, for it was to be kept as a day of liberty and/or deliverance. This included – as is stated in Leviticus 25:10 – that on this particular Day of Atonement, it was that the men should return to their ancestral places. Does this Scripture not allude to what Luke wrote (Luke 2:1–7), when for Joseph, ‘...because he was of the house and lineage of David’, that together with Mary his betrothed wife, Joseph had to return to Bethlehem (on this occasion on the orders of a Gentile, Caesar Augustus), for it was in Bethlehem, David’s city, the place where Joseph’s ancestors had originated, that Mary was to give birth to her Son, the Lord Jesus?

Earlier, we saw how Hebrew names can convey important meanings, such as the name 'Jesus' – or in Hebrew 'Yeshua' – which means 'Saviour'. The same is true of numbers, so for those wanting to learn from Scripture, E. W. Bullinger has provided in his book, 'NUMBER IN SCRIPTURE', a documented listing of the importance (in Hebrew) of numbers. Of the number fifty, Bullinger explains its central meaning:

Fifty is the number of Jubilee or deliverance. It is the issue of  $7 \times 7$  ( $7^2$ ), and points to deliverance and rest following on as the result of perfect consummation of time.

Consummation – a term associated with marriage – is when a man and a woman come together as one flesh. And one of the results of marriage is for children to be conceived and in the fullness of time for the mother to give birth. And after a child is delivered, when her labour pains have ended, rest is the byword. Perfect and fit for purpose for the birth of Jesus is not only the Day of Atonement, but also the Year of Jubilee.

For Mary, who was not married, to have become pregnant could have led to public disgrace. Her safeguard, however, was that Mary had made a covenant with God (as marriage is a covenant for two to become one in order to produce godly offspring – Malachi 2:14). To Gabriel, who told Mary that her child would be known as: *'The Son of God'*, Mary vowed: *"Let it be to me according to your word"* (Luke 1:35–38).

Mary's defence was a concord God had made with Moses. *"If a woman makes a vow to the LORD, and binds herself by some agreement while in her father's house **in her youth**, and her father hears her vow and the agreement by which she has bound herself, and her father holds his peace, **then all her vows shall stand, and every agreement with which she has bound herself shall stand**"* (Numbers 30:3–4).

## THE BRIDEGROOM'S WEDDING BANQUET

For all who are expecting to attend Jesus' wedding banquet; for those who have said "Yes" to Wisdom's invitation (Jewish people and Gentiles alike) and have made themselves ready by responding to the call of His Kingdom – which is the sixth Pillar of Wisdom, ***"Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine I have mixed"*** – we will, I know, one day experience what was made known to the apostle John.

*"Then one of the elders answered, saying to me [the apostle John], "Who are these arrayed in white robes [their wedding garments], and where did they come from?" And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple [Heaven's Tabernacle]. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. They shall neither hunger any more [bread] nor thirst anymore [wine]; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne [the Lord Jesus] will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes" ' (Revelation 7:13–17).*

The mention in this passage of living waters is one we shall return to when we come to and consider the seventh day.

Before bringing to a close the sixth day, I would like to include a section from what is essentially *'The Lord's Prayer'*. In knowing the time had come that His physical work on Earth (His loving-kindness) was nearing its completion, Jesus thanked His Father for enabling Him to finish what He had set out to do. He then prayed for His disciples. However there were others Jesus wanted to include in His prayer, and so He prayed: *"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those*

*who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that you sent Me"* (John 17:20–21).

Jesus' prayer came towards the end of His final Passover meal, when He and His disciples would have remembered the time when the children of Israel had been set-free from slavery in Egypt. In subsequent years, Passover progressed to become what we now know as Holy Communion, when we take bread and wine to remember how Jesus suffered and died in order to set us free from our sin.

Holy Communion is emblematic of the sixth Pillar of Wisdom – ***"Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine I have mixed"*** – and is the precursor to a much greater event, one which has been hovering in the background since the six individual stages (days) of Creation week.

## THE KING'S SPEECH

Following the Master Craftsman's wedding supper – *'The Lord's Supper'* – during which for those who have put their faith and trust in Him, they will be able to commune with Him, it will then be the time to listen to His speech. For the first and second invited guests who will be in attendance, it will be for them: *'The King's Speech'*.

Sequentially, the *'King's Speech'* brings us to the seventh day, the seventh Appointed Time of the LORD, and the seventh Pillar of Wisdom. This, the final chapter in *'His-Story'* about life in all its fullness, is about to commence.



## THE SEVENTH DAY, THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES, THE SEVENTH PILLAR OF WISDOM

*'Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it [God made it holy], because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made' (Genesis 2:1-3).*

Today in much of the so-called developed world, people are said to be living longer; on average beyond seventy years (Psalm 90:10). A hundred years is not as uncommon as it once was as more people achieve what a few years ago would have been rare. However, one aspect of living longer, is that to whatever age a person lives, one third of it is taken up with sleeping. That could be more than twenty five years – about nine years longer than we spend working!

The reason we sleep is to rest, for we have been designed to do so. Any lack of rest and we can easily become morose. So why do we spend a third of our lives sleeping? Why is rest so important and what does this say about the seventh day?

The seventh Jewish festival, the Feast of Tabernacles (in Hebrew it is known as '*Succot*'), mirrors the seventh day as it celebrates "*The Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you have gathered in the fruit of your labors from the field*" (Exodus 23:16). Following the bringing in of their final harvest, the fruits, nuts and berries, this festival marks the time when Jewish people give thanks and rest – as God likewise observed the seventh day by resting.

This festival is also known as the Feast of Booths. It is the *'Appointed Time'* when Jewish people make temporary shelters to live in during the seven days of this festival. These booths are a reminder of the temporary shelters they lived in during the forty years they were in the wilderness, before the children of Israel entered the Promised Land.

The Promised Land, known today as Israel, was where God once led Abraham to and where he and his family lived in tents. *'By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God'* (Hebrews 11:8–10).

The city by faith Abraham was waiting for (and for which those who have put their faith and trust in Jesus are also waiting for), is the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. In this city, it is expected that Abraham will join with, *'...an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church [community] of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel'* (Hebrews 12:22–24).

For Abraham and all of God's people, for those who have trusted in God and in His Son the Lord Jesus and have replied "Yes" to Wisdom's invitations (for Jewish people and for Gentiles), when they have finished the work they have been given to do, their rest is assured. In the New Testament book of Hebrews, this rest is described as entering God's rest (as God rested on the seventh day). But also we are told: *"Be diligent to enter that rest"* (Hebrews 4:10-11).

In Matthew's gospel (11:25) we read of a prayer that Jesus prayed: *"I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed to babes."* Jesus, in addressing His Father as the 'Lord of heaven and earth', is reminiscent of when Moses used the same words when he addressed the children of Israel about choosing life, rather than death.

In Deuteronomy, chapters 28–30, Moses' words must rank as being the most important of his entire life. The final two verses of chapter thirty are the climax of Moses' appeal. *"I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them"* (Deuteronomy 30:19–20). For the children of Israel, after four hundred years of slavery, the Promised Land was assigned to them as their resting place.

Before Jesus prayed, He rebuked all who would not repent of their sin; but then He invited those who do repent: *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and My burden is light"* (Matthew 11:28–30). Jesus is aware of the needs of all who follow Him, and especially if they suffer for Him, to enter their eternal rest.

Understanding what it means to find rest with Jesus, Jesus explained to His disciples: *"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” (John 14:1–3).*

The temporary shelters Jewish people construct and use during their ‘*Sabbath-Rest*’ (Leviticus 23:39) at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, when they give thanks for their final harvest, corresponds to the many mansions that Jesus spoke of during His final hours with His disciples.

Earlier, when Jesus went up to Jerusalem to attend the Feast of Tabernacles, it was, *‘On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water” ’* (John 7:37–38).

The seventh Pillar of Wisdom – ***“Forsake foolishness and live, and go in the way of understanding”*** (Proverbs 9:6) – is a description of what Jesus said to His fellow Jews on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. But the seventh Pillar of Wisdom is also for the Gentiles, who although at first they may have lacked in their understanding of their Hebraic inheritance, many Gentiles have also come to faith. In fact, for Jews and for Gentiles, for those who have accepted Wisdom’s invitation (the fourth and fifth Pillars of Wisdom), it is because they have chosen ‘*life*’ by putting their trust in Jesus, rather than having chosen foolishness and death.

To the new believers in Corinth, Paul wrote mainly for those who lacked spiritual understanding. i.e., Gentiles. *‘For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen,*

*and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God – and righteousness and sanctification and redemption – that as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the LORD” (1 Corinthians 1:26–31).*

The invitation of the Holy Spirit (Wisdom) is for both Jews and Gentiles to attend the marriage supper of the Lamb of God, so that when He, the Lord Jesus appears, they will be ready and able to join Him at His table.

Included as part of John’s vision as described in the book of Revelation, there is a description of what it will be like for those who have made themselves ready for the Bridegroom. *‘Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “That they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them” ’ (Revelation 14:12–13).*

After God had finished His work then rested on the seventh day (as Jewish people also rest after their final harvest at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles), for those who believe in Jesus, they will be able to experience what Jesus promised them: *“...and you will find rest for your souls.”* It is, as Eli Lizorkin-Eyzeberg has explained, Biblical rest implies:

...not merely relaxation from exertion, but rather stationary rest – the absence of activity and movement.

In other words, as a summary of all that Jesus came to do and to teach – that we might find rest for our minds and our souls – His words remind us of the seventh Pillar: ***“Forsake foolishness and live, and go in the way of understanding.”***

The illustration Jesus used when He spoke to the Pharisees about His kingdom was of a King's wedding supper. He said to them: *"The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding [those who received the first invitations]; and they were not willing to come. Again, he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding." ' But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city [Jerusalem was destroyed by fire in C.E. 70]. Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.' (Matthew 22:1-14).*

In this depiction of His own marriage supper, Jesus used this parable as an illustration to explain what will eventually happen, and how if they, the Jewish people, the first invited guests, reject Him, what would happen to them and their cherished city. This would result in invitations being sent to the nations, so that if Gentiles came to believe in Jesus, they, too, will become His guests at His marriage supper.

Jewish people hold to a tradition that when their Messiah (Christ) comes, there will be a great feast, such as a wedding feast, and at the end when the wine is drunk, a toast will be given at which it will be said: *"l'chaim!"* [*"To Life!"*].

Sadly, many Jewish people still believe that God has kept these things hidden from them since the dawn of Creation. But this is not the case, for they only have to turn to and read what their seer Isaiah once wrote about their Messiah.

*'For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this'* (Isaiah 9:6–7).

*"l'chaim!"* – *'To Life'* – is what the seven Pillars of Wisdom, the Master Craftsman's plan, were designed to achieve.

To bring to a close these thoughts about the first seven days, I felt it appropriate if I were to conclude with the words from Proverbs 8:32–36. These lines – which speak so clearly of the Lord Jesus as being the Master Craftsman – follow on from Proverbs 8:22–31 which I quoted at the end of the first day. They come just before the listing in Proverbs 9:1–6 of the Bible's portrayal of the seven Pillars of Wisdom.

For those who have made themselves ready by responding to and clinging on to Wisdom and understanding, there is more than a hint in these verses of the Bridegroom who is yet to come. The Bible informs us that if there is any delay in His coming, it is because His Father is gracious in waiting for His Son's wedding chamber to be filled with His guests.

## PROVERBS 8:32–36

*“Now, therefore, listen to me, my children, for blessed are those who keep my ways.”*

*“Hear instruction and be wise, and do not disdain it.”*

*“Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoever finds me finds life, and obtains favor from the LORD; but he who sins against me wrongs his own soul.”*

***“All those who hate me love death.”***

The last line in these verses from Proverbs – which I have deliberately highlighted – is a heart-rending statement for those who have rejected Jesus as their Master Craftsman. Yet it is a solemn reminder of the consequences of ignoring Wisdom’s counsel. Therefore, the wisest thing to do, is to follow Wisdom’s advice: ***“Forsake foolishness and live, and go in the way of understanding.”***

Jesus says to all who have eyes to see and ears to hear: *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me”* (John 14:6).



## THE MASTER CRAFTSMAN'S PLAN

The Master Craftsman's plan is one which has seen many lives transformed through coming to know our Maker. As with much of what God has created, His plan is multi-faceted. (1). The seven days of Creation. (2). The seven Appointed Times of the LORD. (3). The seven Pillars of Wisdom.

1. Jesus, who at the time of the Passover celebration and at Calvary, God's *'Light'* was briefly extinguished. When the children of Israel marked their homes with the blood of a Passover lamb, its flesh was then consumed as their evening meal. The evening before Jesus died at Passover, He informed His disciples: *"The bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world"* (John 6:51). The body of Jesus is the first Pillar of Wisdom.

2. Jesus, the righteous (Unleavened Bread), surrendered His life for the unrighteous. The second Pillar of Wisdom, the blood of Jesus – *'for the life of all flesh is its blood'* (Leviticus 17:14) – is recalled when we drink wine at the meal of Holy Communion; symbolically, Jesus' blood.

3. Jesus, having died at the Lord's Appointed Time of Passover, rose from the dead three days later. Jesus then appeared on the same day and on two separate occasions to His disciples at two tables, each of which was prepared for a meal. This, a first-fruit sign, confirms the dead can rise again and is the third Pillar of Wisdom.

4. Jesus, who told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem, sent the Holy Spirit at the time of the festival of the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), first to reap a spiritual harvest among Jewish people (Acts 2 & 13:45–46, and Romans 1:16).

The fourth Pillar of Wisdom corresponds to when 3,000 Jewish people responded to Wisdom's invitation.

5. Jesus said: *"Salvation is of the Jews"* (John 4:22). His words recall the preaching of the Gospel by His disciples (Jews) to the Gentiles, as in the sound of the trumpet at the time of the fifth festival, the Feast of Trumpets. The Gentiles are represented in the fifth Pillar of Wisdom.

6. Jesus, our High Priest, has granted us access into God's presence. When on the Day of Atonement Aaron entered the Holy-of-Holies with blood from two different animals, one for himself and one for the people, it was because he had been appointed to act as God's emissary. Although the mixing of two bloods may seem a mystery; nevertheless, as Paul wrote: *'God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself...'* (2 Corinthians 5:19). The sixth Pillar of Wisdom, ***"Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed"***, is Wisdom's call to those who have received the Lord Jesus as their Saviour and Lord.

7. Jesus, with His final breath, cried out: *"It is finished!"* (John 19:30). His words recall how that when God had finished His work, on the seventh day He rested (Genesis 2:2). For those who love Jesus, a day is coming when they will have finished the work He has given them to do. They will then enter their rest. The seventh festival, Feast of Tabernacles, is a time of contentment and rest, as is the seventh Pillar of Wisdom: ***"Forsake foolishness and live, and go in the way of understanding."***

Thus within the seven days of Creation, the seven Appointed Times, and the seven Pillars of Wisdom, God's *'...invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead* (Romans 1:20). This means that if we reject Him, there is no excuse.

## THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB

The marriage supper of the Lord Jesus – *'The Lamb of God'* – and His Bride, is an event which has been anticipated from the very dawn of Creation. Its modus operandi is as follows.

1. The Father has provided the food – prefigured in the body of His Son – for His Son's Bride. (The Bride is made up of the guests; Jews and Gentiles).
2. The Father has provided the wine – prefigured in the blood of His Son – for His Son's wedding.
3. The Lord's Table for His Son's wedding – pre-figured in the Communion Table – has been made ready.
4. The first invited guests, Jewish people who have been forgiven, sanctified and made holy, are dressed and are ready for the marriage supper of the Lord Jesus.
5. The second invited guests, Gentiles who have been forgiven, sanctified and made holy, are dressed and are ready for the marriage supper of the Lord Jesus.
6. The guests (His Son's Bride) partake of the meal.
7. The Bridegroom speaks: *"Welcome; for you were dead and you are alive, you were lost and you are found."*

When John was on the Isle of Patmos, he heard a voice from Heaven saying to him: *"Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!" And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying,*

*“Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.”*

*And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.*

*Then He said to me, “Write; ‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’ ”*

*And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God.”*  
(Revelation 19:5–9).

## SEVEN AND DR. ALLEN WISEMAN

Two weeks after I noticed in Genesis 1:1 – 2:3 how Creation *and* God's Kingdom follow a common trajectory – which is to be expected – I was introduced in a hotel restaurant in Tel Aviv, Israel, to Dr. Allen Wiseman, a Canadian-born Jew who has a doctorate in Jewish philosophy. Dr. Wiseman informed me that he had just recently written a pamphlet about the link between the seven days of Creation and the seven Holy Appointed Times of the LORD. Dr. Wiseman writes:

GOD's seven Holy Appointed Times, or feasts, mark the yearly, Biblical calendar. GOD initiated the series in Exodus 12, to be fully listed in Leviticus 23. These times represent a pattern of Scripture that begins with the seven days or periods of Creation Week, that are echoed by the regular weekly cycle, and further elaborated in Israel's deliverance from Egyptian slavery. As Creation continues until the end of time, so to do the effects of these seven feasts.

Both the repetition of the weekly cycle and the seven yearly holidays, remind us of real past events that also point to the prophetic future. As such, these feasts are more than ordinary holidays. While the regular weekly and yearly cycles ingrain in us a down-to-earth rhythm in life, the linear process gives us an overall perspective that spans from the very beginning of Creation to the ultimate completion of GOD's redemptive purposes.

Historically, because the Christian world veered away from its Jewish roots in the early centuries, the larger scope and significance of the LORD's seven feasts were often overlooked, or not sufficiently understood.

Not before, or since, have I met a Jewish man who has the initial and surname, *A. Wiseman*! The possibility of such an encounter and in a far-away country must be minuscule? And that our meeting took place in Israel only fourteen days – seven plus seven – after I had first seen that the seven days of Creation and the seven Appointed Times of the LORD are so similar, was, to put it mildly, awesome.

Of course, I thanked GOD for the timing of our meeting – which I perceived as the guidance of the Holy Spirit – and which enabled me to comprehend more fully, these vital links. These links, as explained in Scripture for all to see and understand (and in what I have tried to convey, although I may have come short), relate to all that God has intended, both at the beginning of time and for the end of Earth's time. As we have seen, God's plan is a perfect plan, for which He chose His Son to be the One who would change our human nature which is sinful, to one which would reflect His own.

A few years later, in early 2017, and only a few weeks before I was due to go to Moldova for a second time to lecture to young people about the Hebrew roots of the Christian faith, when reading in the Old Testament book of Proverbs (one of three books in the Bible known as '*Wisdom Literature*', the other two being the books of Job and Ecclesiastes), I came to see how the Bible's seven Pillars of Wisdom also feature in this same blueprint of God's plan.

But is not seven, as Dr. Wiseman has pointed out, just one example of the richness of the Bible? To whatever degree we study the Bible, there will always be new discoveries. Studying God's word is a bit like a mountaineer who does not easily give up, knowing that there are always new vistas beyond the horizon. The secret, of course, is to seek first the Kingdom of God, and then, and only then, will we discover God's bountiful provision. (See Philippians 3:7–14).

## PSALM 23

Having taken into account the links which connect the seven days of Creation to the seven Holy Appointed Times of the LORD, and also the seven Pillars of Wisdom, I felt it may help if I were to add to this study a further connection I was prompted to consider as I set out from our home for a walk. It concerns Psalm 23, where David, the carer of his father's sheep, wrote: "*The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.*"

David's much-loved Psalm is often read or sung as a song of praise and worship, because of its theme of trusting in God. At other times, it is chosen to be recited at times of sorrow, such as at the end of a life, because of its comforting words.

Many have written about Psalm 23, and in this final section I will be quoting two who I have found helpful. One writer is Professor H. C. Leupold D.D., of Old Testament exegesis of the Evangelical Lutheran Seminary of Capital University, Columbus, Ohio. In his book, 'EXPOSITION OF THE PSALMS' (1959), and in his comments about Psalm 23, Professor Leupold writes:

One grammatical item must be noted in determining the whole pattern of the translation. Practically all versions from the Septuagint down very properly begin with the future in v.1, "*I shall not want.*" From this point onward all the verbs till 5a have the same form of the Hebrew verb – the imperfect. Consistency demands these imperfects be rendered either as futures or presents. Though the Hebrew verb allows for either, the future deserves the preference, for on the basis of the fact that the LORD is the shepherd, the psalmist looks confidently toward the future.

This plain fact, though noted already in the Prayer Book Version [Book of Common Prayer] has not been observed in any of the familiar versions, not even in the RSV.

Although not entirely convinced David's Psalm was intended to be Messianic, Professor Leupold does point out that the covenant person of God, 'Yahweh', is *'The Good Shepherd'*. Leupold's conclusion of Psalm 23 is...

...it suggests thoughts that point in the direction of the Messiah.

As Professor Leupold makes clear, if all but one of the verbs which appear in Psalm 23 indicate the future, this suggests David was not writing about himself, but of a person yet to be born. Leupold also refers to other commentators who have said of David's Psalm...

...it is pitched on too high a level to be in any real sense attainable by any saint of God.

Presumably this must rule out the Psalm's author? But if the personal pronouns which appear in Psalm 23 do not belong to David, then to whom do they apply?

## **MY WALK WITH SUZIE**

It was about a decade ago, one afternoon as I left our home to take our dog Suzie for a walk, that I asked the Lord if the actual timing for the birth of Jesus was recorded in Scripture. As I prayed, immediately I felt drawn to consider Psalm 23. After my walk with Suzie, the first thing I did was to read through Psalm 23. Gradually, as I read, I began to see that a thousand years before Jesus was born, David, it would appear, was given detailed knowledge about the timing for Jesus' birth (plus other important information about Jesus).



In Psalm 23, I now see a number of illustrations, seven of which correspond to the seven Holy Appointed Times of the LORD as listed in Leviticus chapter 23. When seven appears in Scripture, it can have the meaning of *'Spiritual Perfection'*. For Jewish people, these seven Appointed Times are deeply embedded in their consciousness as they continue to reflect on what God has said about Himself and them: *"I am your God and you are My people."* This statement is repeated as a continuous theme throughout the Bible.

### **PSALM 23 AND PASSOVER – Part One (Leviticus 23:4–5).**

The first of the seven Appointed Times is the Jewish festival of Passover, and is the topic of Psalm 23:1–3a.

***"The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul."***

The opening words of Psalm 23 are, *'The LORD'*. This, the covenant name for GOD – that is *'Yahweh'* – is singular, and points to the keeper of the Passover Lamb(s). When Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a young donkey, the date was the tenth day of the first month in the Lunar cycle of time.

It was the same day of the same month that the children of Israel would have made a selection of young lambs without any blemish, or fault, for the Passover, to enable them to leave Egypt (Exodus 12:3–5). It was also the same day of the same month when the children of Israel crossed the River Jordan to enter the Promised Land (Joshua 4:19). Four days later, on the fourteenth day of the first month – both in Egypt (Exodus 12:6) and in the Promised Land (Joshua 5:10) – the Passover lambs were slain. It was the same day that Jesus, the *'Lamb of God'*, died for our sin, and so the opening words

of Psalm 23 lead us to recall Jesus as being God's Passover Lamb (this time in Jerusalem). ***"The LORD is my shepherd."***

Before his ministry began, when John the Baptist saw Jesus approaching him, John said: *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, **for He was before me**' "* (John 1:29–30). When we think of Jesus and how John the Baptist described Him, and then as we read the opening words of Psalm 23, is it not the Lord Jesus we should be seeing as God's chosen Passover Lamb?

When Jesus knew the time had finally come for others to take His life, He said to His disciples Andrew and Philip: *"The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified."* He then went on to pray: *"Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name."* A voice then came from heaven, saying: *"I have both glorified it and will glorify it again"* (John 12:22–23 & 27–28).

When Jesus said, ***"Now My soul is troubled,"*** it triggered an immediate response. The response was taken straight from Psalm 23:3a – ***'He restores my soul.'***

**PSALM 23 AND THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD** (Leviticus 23:6–8).

When the Passover meal was being prepared in Egypt – for which Unleavened Bread was specified – it took place at twilight on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month (Exodus 12:6 & 18). Luke identifies these two festivals as being one: *'Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called Passover'* (Luke 22:1). Ezekiel also refers to these two festivals as being one. *'In the first month, on the fourteenth*

*day of the month, you shall observe the Passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten' (Ezekiel 45:21).*

At Passover and the feast of Unleavened Bread (in Leviticus 23:4–8 they are described as being held on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of the first month), these festivals recall the time when God set His people free from bondage. In Scripture, unleavened bread represents holiness; for God's people were called out of bondage in Egypt to become a holy nation. God once said to Israel: *"Be Holy, for I am Holy"* (Leviticus 11:45).

Whenever leaven – that is yeast – is mentioned in the Bible, it usually refers to sin (disobeying God). Paul describes this in his letter to the believers in Galatia, showing the contrast that exists between sin and holiness.

Of sin, Paul wrote: *'Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which ... those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.'*

For holiness, Paul describes this as being: *'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law'* (Galatians 5:19–23). Therefore, concerning holiness and the Lord Jesus, in the words of Psalm 23:3b, we read,

***'He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.'***

For the words ***'paths of righteousness'***, it is more accurate to render this phrase as being ***'Circles of righteousness'***. In other words, there is no beginning or ending of the righteousness of the Lord Jesus.

## PSALM 23 AND PASSOVER – Part Two (Leviticus 23:4–5).

After having chosen the One who is the *'Lamb of God'* and established His credentials, Psalm 23 now moves towards the time of the actual Passover, and how Jesus was to suffer.

***'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.'***

The opening words can also be rendered as: *'Though I walk through a valley of deepest darkness.'* This darkness not only refers to the time when Jesus was alone in the garden of Gethsemane near the Kidron Valley (in Hebrew its name means: *'The Valley where Yahweh shall judge'*), but also to the darkness which took place when Jesus was dying. Jesus knew He was destined to suffer pain and death, yet He had no need to fear death's consequences for He was without sin.

The words, ***'Your rod and Your staff they comfort me'***, is a phrase which the Rev. John Stevenson, vicar of Patricxboune-With-Bridge, Canterbury, England, whose exposition of the twenty-third Psalm 'LORD OUR SHEPHERD' (1850) has become a nineteenth century spiritual classic, explains as:

The rod is the work and presence of the Holy Spirit, for it is an emblem of His power and His ownership as He gathers and protects those who are His.

Concerning the *'staff'*, Rev. Stevenson says this is an emblem of the *'Word of God'*, God's written word.

Because Jesus was willing to suffer for those He came to save, it helped by being dependent on the Holy Spirit and the written word of God as an aide-mémoire, to remind Him of the importance of what the prophets had written about Him.

Rev. Stevenson continues by explaining the promises which are contained within Psalm 23.

Every promise contained in Scripture is centred and treasured up in the Lord Jesus. We have no right to claim the fulfilment of any one of them; but Christ has a full right and title to the performance of them all. The blessedness of the gospel message consists of this, that Christ has made Himself one with His people, and freely offers to their use all that He possesses. What is His by right, becomes ours by grace. All the promises of God are ours in Him. In ourselves we are bankrupt, but in Christ we have a Surety who is infinitely rich, in whom it hath pleased the Father that all [the] fullness should dwell. (Colossians 1:19).

#### **PSALM 23 AND FEAST OF FIRSTFRUITS (Leviticus 23:10–14).**

The third of the seven Hebrew feasts – the Hebrew word for Feast means ‘*Appointed Times*’ – is to celebrate the start of the barley harvest, and this is why at the Feast of Firstfruits there is much happiness and sharing of food. The Feast of Firstfruit brings us to our next verse in Psalm 23, verse 5a.

***‘You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.’***

During His ‘*valley of the shadow of death*’ experience, Jesus was surrounded by His enemies; from Jewish religious leaders and those who falsely accused Him, to Roman soldiers who mocked and bludgeoned Him, and then nailed Him through His hands and His feet to one of their crosses.

However, three days later, on the first day of the week, Jesus overcame their callousness and rejection by rising from the dead. The apostle Paul wrote about these things – of Jesus’

resurrection and the festival of Firstfruits. Paul wrote: *'But now is Christ risen from the dead and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep [that is, they have died]'* (1Corinthians 15:20).

Paul's mention of *'Firstfruits'* points to Jesus' resurrection as being linked to the Hebrew festival of Firstfruits, which was observed on the first day of the week after the start of the barley harvest (Leviticus 23:10-14). The first day of the week was the most appropriate day for Jesus to have risen; for after the darkness which covered the Earth at the time of His death, it was a repeat of what God had said on the first day: *"Let there be light"; and there was light.*

### **JESUS TURNS THE TABLES – METAPHORICALLY SPEAKING**

When Jesus made Himself known to two of His disciples in the village of Emmaus (referred to in Luke 24 and the third day of this study), then later the same day to His disciples in Jerusalem, for each of His appearances, a table is mentioned.

His two appearances recalls Psalm 23, ***'You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies'***, which describes what took place as the enemies of Jesus, who remained vigilant to His promise of being resurrected after three days and three nights, placed security guards at His tomb. Jesus, of course, was never going to be held captive in a sealed and guarded tomb, but He appeared first to two of His disciples and broke bread with them at a table, then later the same evening and in Jerusalem, He again shared in a meal with His disciples at a table.

Regarding persecution, Jewish people have a saying: *"They tried to kill us. We survived. Let's eat!"* Similar words may also be applied to Jesus on the day of His resurrection – and at two tables. *"They tried to kill Me. I survived. Let's eat!"*

## **PSALM 23 AND THE FEAST OF WEEKS (Leviticus 23:15–22).**

Seven Sabbaths and one day later (fifty days) and the Feast of Weeks is held to celebrate the wheat harvest. Today, we recall this feast as the time when *‘The Day of Pentecost had fully come’* (Acts 2:1) and the Holy Spirit was poured out on about one hundred and twenty disciples (Acts 1:15).

In recalling the wheat harvest (the Feast of Weeks), after the disciples had been filled with the Holy Spirit and following Peter’s first sermon calling on the people in Jerusalem to repent, about three thousand Jewish people – having asked the disciples, *“Men and brethren, what shall we do?”* (Acts 2:37) – were baptized and added to the disciples. It was the first harvest of Jewish people and was in accordance with the timing of their second yearly harvest, the Feast of Weeks.

Although the anointing of the Holy Spirit took place at the time of the Feast of Weeks; earlier, at Bethany, *‘A woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured it on His head as He sat at the table’* (Matthew 26:7). Her action, therefore, was to anoint the head of Jesus in fulfilment of Psalm 23:5 (and as a precursor to the anointing of the disciples by the Holy Spirit).

***‘You anoint my head with oil.’***

## **PSALM 23:5b AND THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE (Luke 22).**

***‘My cup runs over.’***

For this phrase, I have not been able to link it directly to any of the feasts of the LORD – except when Jesus attended a wedding feast and they ran out of wine. Maybe this feast was a prelude to His own wedding feast? This could explain why Jesus said to His mother: *“My hour has not yet come.”*

John records (John 2:1–11) that the servants did what Jesus told them to do by filling six stone waterpots with water – which they filled to the brim. But this is not the only time a container is described as having been filled to the brim, for the words, ***“My cup runs over”***, comes at a pivotal point in Psalm 23.

Never underestimate the suffering that Jesus must have experienced in the garden of Gethsemane (its name means: *‘Olive Press’*). Its name reminds us of the ancient process involved in obtaining oil from olives, when they are crushed four times to extract every last drop of oil. Being crushed in the garden of Gethsemane is how Jesus must have felt before He became the fulfilment of the first two Appointed Times; Passover and the festival of Unleavened Bread.

In Gethsemane, Jesus prayed, saying: *“Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours be done”* (Luke 22:42). For Jesus, His cup did indeed run over – *“Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground”* (Luke 22:44). For Jesus, the time He spent in the garden of Gethsemane was a pivotal moment as deep anguish nearly overcame Him, and so these words, ***‘My cup runs over’***, are included as a pivotal portrayal of Jesus (like olives) being crushed to His extreme.

### **PSALM 23 AND FEAST OF TRUMPETS** (Leviticus 23:23–25).

The first day of the Jewish people’s civil year was when the Feast of Trumpets took place, and two silver trumpets were blown as *‘A memorial for you before your God: I am the LORD your God’* (Numbers 10:2 & 10). The trumpet is a reminder that if we obey God (as Abraham obeyed God), we can be counted as being God’s friends. In Psalm 23:6a, we read,

***‘Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me...’***



Silver is often seen in the Bible as a symbol of purity, and in the two silver trumpets used at the time of the Feast of Trumpets, there is a clear portrayal of the Gospel. The first trumpet I see as representative of God's goodness in what Jesus said to Nicodemus: *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..."* God's goodness is seen in His love. The second trumpet I see as representative of God's mercy, and is linked to what Jesus said next: *"...that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life"* (John 3:15 & 16). God's mercy is seen in His kindness.

### **PSALM 23 AND DAY OF ATONEMENT (Leviticus 23:27-32).**

Once I had seen Psalm 23 has a strong resemblance to the seven Appointed Times of the LORD (and is in the same sequence as these *'Times'* were first given by God to Moses), it then became clear that the next words must correspond to the Day of Atonement, the Holiest of these seven Appointed Times. Therefore, as we continue to read in Psalm 23, we note how the day of Jesus' birth had been carefully planned. Every life-span begins from the day a person is born, to the day they die. This was so true of Jesus, for His life-span was defined so precisely by the words we find in Psalm 23:6b.

#### ***'All the days of my life.'***

It was these six words which enabled me to see Jesus: from the day He was born to the day He died. To understand the application of this phrase, is to understand why God chose this day for the Day of Atonement; a Day of high expectancy.

The date set-aside for the Day of Atonement was never a man's choice. God chose the Day/date and He later informed Moses of His decision. I now think of the Day of Atonement – *'Yom Kippur'*, a Day of prayer and fasting – as Jesus' birthday, which, according to the Bible, is to be observed forever.

What I found so interesting about the words, '***All the days of my life***', and how they describe the life-span of Jesus, is how similar words can be found in Genesis 3:14. Here we read – after Satan had tempted Eve and she and her husband Adam had disobeyed God – '*So the LORD God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat [consume] dust ***all the days of your life***."*' (N.B. Man being derived from dust. See page 70).

*'Then to Adam He said ... "Cursed is the ground [dust] for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it ***all the days of your life***" '* (verse 17). God's rebuke to the serpent, then to Adam who had sinned when he disobeyed God, are similar to the words we find in Psalm 23:6b – '***All the days of my life***'.

From when Jesus was born to when He died, Jesus' life-span can be described by using the words we find in Psalm 23 (also Genesis 3:14–17), that Jesus would experience from when He was born to when He became God's emissary as He was '*accursed of God*' by being fixed by nails to a cross (a tree). For tree, see Deuteronomy 21:23 and Acts 10:39.

#### **PSALM 23 AND FEAST OF TABERNACLES** (Leviticus 23:33–43).

The Feast of Tabernacles – or '*Ingathering*' – completes the Jewish people's seven Appointed Times, and for this final festival of ingathering, it will be as it states in Psalm 23:6c,

***'And I will dwell in the house of the LORD...'***

This statement is in unison with Isaiah 66:1. '*Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest?"*' God's house – established upon its seven Pillars – has been designed and built by Wisdom (Proverbs 9:1).

The first appearance of Jesus was temporary, as with the Sukkot Jewish people construct and dwell in for seven days when they celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles, when their final harvest (fruits, nuts and berries) has been gathered in.

Once Jesus had completed the work His Father had sent Him to do – *‘And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth’* (John 1:14) – to gather in a harvest of people from the world He had created, Jesus was able to return to His Father and to once again: ***‘...dwell in the house of the LORD’*** (Psalm 23:6c). For those who believe in Jesus and have received Him into their lives as their Saviour and Lord, they can look ahead to the end-time of God’s ingathering, and to their *‘Haven of Rest’*, when they, too, will be able to: ***‘...dwell in the house of the LORD.’***

## **PSALM 23 AND ITS FINAL WORD**

David’s final word in Psalm 23 is a word that is connected to two events. The first event concerns how long the children of Israel were expected to keep the seven annual Appointed Times of the LORD, and so this word is linked to these Times. As is stated in Exodus 23:14, Leviticus 16:34 and 23:41, Psalm 23:6 and Nahum 1:15, God said that the children of Israel were to keep these seven festivals,

***‘Forever.’***

The second event I see is the assurance we have been given if we put our faith and trust in Jesus, which is *‘Everlasting Life’*, meaning, of course, ***‘Forever’***.

***Forever*** – *‘Eternal Life’* – is also emphasised in the prayer Jesus prayed before He went to the garden of Gethsemane. *“Father,”* He prayed, *“the hour has come. Glorify Your Son,*

that Your Son may also glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give **eternal life** to as many as You have given Him. And this is **eternal life**, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:1-3).

## PSALM 84

In drawing these thoughts to a close, I thought it appropriate to include a few lines from one of Israel's short symphonies, written by one of its Chief Musicians. The reason is that its assessment is similar to the conclusion we find at the end of Psalm 23 – **'And I will dwell in the House of the LORD forever'**. And also what Jesus said in His prayer, *"And this is eternal life..."* The following words are taken from Psalm 84.

*"How lovely is Your tabernacle, O LORD of hosts! My soul longs, yes even faints for the courts of the LORD; My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God" (verses 1-2).*

*"Blessed are those who dwell in Your house; they will still be praising You." Selah (verse 4).*

*"For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly. O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man who trusts in You!" (verses 10-12).*

In conclusion, is this most popular of Psalms – Psalm 23 – a paraphrase of the seven Appointed Times of the LORD which Jewish people continue to observe? Yes, I believe it is. This means that God must have been planning for our salvation, long before the Master Craftsman was born in Bethlehem, then later when He died at Calvary, only to rise again.

## NEARER TO THEE

I end these jottings with lines from Methodist hymn writer, Mrs C. H. Morris (1862–1929). Since I first discovered who Jesus is, it has been one of my favourite hymns.

*Nearer, still nearer, close to Thy heart,  
Draw me my Saviour, so precious Thou art;  
Fold me, O fold me, close to Thy breast,  
Shelter me safe in that "Haven of Rest."*

*Nearer, still nearer, nothing I bring,  
Naught as an offering to Jesus my King;  
Only my sinful, now contrite heart,  
Grant me the cleansing Thy blood doth impart.*

*Nearer, still nearer, Lord to be thine,  
Sin with its follies I gladly resign;  
All of its pleasures, pomp and its pride,  
Give me but Jesus my Lord crucified.*

*Nearer, still nearer, while life shall last,  
Till all its struggles and trials are past;  
Then through eternity, ever I'll be,  
Nearer, my Saviour, still nearer to Thee.*

If you have never prayed such a prayer and you feel the need to do so, I urge you, do so now. I assure you, you will never regret asking the Lord Jesus to become your Saviour and Lord. Also, it will be your assurance that when you depart from this life, as He has promised, you will be with Him forever.



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