

Review: Sam Nadler-*Messiah in the Feasts of Israel*, Word of Messiah Ministries, Charlotte, NC, 2002 (2010 edn.)

Pages: 234

Reminders of Jesus

A good summary of the seven Biblical feasts of Leviticus 23, also Hanukkah and Purim, with interesting Jewish traditional and historical insights given.

Based on Jewish tradition, the author mistakes Passover as an eight day festival, merging it with Unleavened Bread. The Bible says Passover is only one day (from the fourteenth day at even to the fifteenth day, Leviticus 23.5-6).

While a strong case is made for Christians to keep these feasts (especially instead of the pagan festivals of Easter and Christmas), deferring to Paul would be wise:

“One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.” Romans 14.5, Authorized Version

The author also uses the anti-Christian BCE and CE year titles, rather than BC and AD which make the birth of the Messiah the fulcrum of time.

A great weakness is reliance on strange English bibles [even referring to the corrupt NASB on p. 74].

The end-of-chapter questions, scriptural table, and glossary are nice touches to help with study.

Prologue (pp. 4-7)

Feasts are called *moedim*, meaning “appointments”.

The seven annual appointments are in Leviticus 23. The first three symbolise redemption: Passover, Unleavened Bread, and Firstfruits. The fourth is Messiah's body being established on earth. The last three are in the seventh month and symbolise consummation: Trumpets, Atonement, and Booths.

Additional feasts are Hanukkah and Purim.

I) Sabbath (pp. 8-19)

“Shabbat” is related to *shevet*, to dwell and abide.

Kadosh is “holy” in Hebrew.

The Sabbath is a *sign* of future rest and peace.

The Messianic Age is also called *yom shekulo Shabbat*.

From the 1st-3rdC AD believers worshipped on Shabbat. It was only at Laodicea in AD 336 were it was thought to transfer worship to Sunday.

The Sabbath has never been changed.

II) The Feast of Passover (pp. 20-61)

A *kittel* is a white ceremonial robe worn by the head of the household during Pesach.

The author believes it is an eight-day festival, based on Jewish tradition which merges Passover and Unleavened Bread.

A Haggadah is a booklet that leads families through the Exodus story.

Households must be scoured for any yeast (Hb. *chamets*). The father would traditionally use a feather and spoon to clean everything.

Unleavened bread is *matzah*, or “the bread of haste”.

At the Last Supper, guests would be sitting on low tables, lying on their left side at an angle, and would eat with their right hand.

Seder (Hb. “order”), is divided into four sections, with four drinks from the cup: Sanctification, Plagues, Redemption, and Praise.

First is ceremonial hand-washing is called *urchats*.

Next parsley (Hb. *karpas*) is eaten.

Then comes a *tash* (also *echad*) or bag with three pieces of *matsah* inside. The middle one (the *Afikomen*) is removed and hidden for one of the children to find after the meal.

Tradition has the three representing the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, also, Israel, the *kohenim*, and the Lord. Isaac and the priests are middle pieces as they represent sacrifices.

Then *maror* (horseradish) is eaten.

Then the father puts *charoset* (chopped apples mixed with spices) on the *matzah* for eating. This represents the mortar and labour used to make Pharaoh’s bricks.

There is an egg (Hb. *haggigah*) meant to be a reminder of the temple and holy day sacrifices that are no more. The egg is round and endless, like eternal life.

Next, the Four Questions are asked of a child under thirteen

(i) Why do we eat *matzah* only on this night?

(ii) Why do we eat herbs rather than the usual vegetables?

(iii) Why do we dip twice?

(iv) Why do we recline and not sit upright?

Bitter herbs are to represent a lifetime of pain in the bondage of sin.

The Passover Lamb had to be inspected for four days, likewise Jesus was, whom Pilot declared as faultless on the fourteenth day (Lk 23.4).

Jesus' betrayal is prophesied in Ps 41.9, and Zc 11.12-13.

The rabbis teach the sacrifice of Isaac was Abraham's tenth test.

The ten judgments upon Pharaoh: Blood, Frogs, Vermin, Flies, Plague, Boils, Lice, Hail, Locusts, Darkness, First Born Slaying.

A miraculous sign in Hebrew is an *ot*.

The *zoro'ah* (lamb shankbone) is left on the *seder* plate as a reminder of the Lamb.

The Cup of Hallel ("Praise"), also Elijah's Cup is for the empty seat opposite the father, since Elijah must come before Messiah and the Jews are still waiting (thus the saying *Lashana Haba'ah birushalayim* ["next year in Jerusalem"]).

Pesach and Booths were regarded as Pilgrim Feasts.

Lulav is a cluster of palm, willow, and myrtle branches waved to glorify God.

Tamim means "perfect".

The Biblical year was to begin in Nisan (March-April).

III) Firstfruits (pp. 62-81)

An *omer* is four dry quarts.

Following the Sabbath, the priest would present the firstfruits of the barley harvest to the Lord so the rest would be accepted. This used to be observed the day after the Sabbath of the Passover (Sunday).

The author claims Jesus rose on Sunday morning which is when the priests were offering up the firstfruits in the Temple.

The disciples could not visit the tomb on the Sabbath as it would have broken the law.

Mary was surnamed Magdalene as she was born in Magdala. She arrived early at the tomb (0300-0600, of the fourth watch by the Greek word *proi*).

Jesus, if alive after being taken down, would have died under the hundred-pound weight of the spices, or by suffocation from the grave cloth wrappings.

The tomb was sealed by the Romans with their seal, of which breaking meant death.

In John 20.17, the NASB's "stop clinging to Me" is said to be a superior Greek translation.

Ratsui is "pleased".

IV) The Feast of Pentecost (pp. 82-105)

In Exodus 32, 3,000 were killed for rebelling against the law, however in Acts 2.41, 3,000 were redeemed with the giving of the Holy Spirit.

The Shavuot offering are two loaves of leavened bread, the leaven signifying the sinfulness of saved man, both Jew and Gentile brought together in one Messiah.

Solet means "strip".

A goldsmith melts impure gold and collects dross from the surface, repeating until only his reflection can be seen.

The final Shavuot firstfruits will be the 144,000 Jewish Tribulation believers.

The Pharisees and Sadducees differed on the date of Shavuot in the first century; the difficulty was the reference Sabbath (the Passover itself which was a Sabbath, or the regular Sabbath-the Pharisees believed the former, the Sadducees the latter).

The author says in the year Jesus died, the sixteenth of Nisan was a Sunday meaning both were right that year.

Pharisaical tradition prevailed with their writings, so *week*, rather than a count of seven Sabbaths (which could be longer than fifty days from the second day of Unleavened Bread).

Paul was determined to be at Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost (Ac 20.16).

V) The Feast of Trumpets (pp. 106-123)

Rosh Hashanah, or Jewish New Year is called *Yom HaTeruah* (Day of Blowing). It falls on the lunar month of Tishri [September-October]. *Tishri* is Babylonian for “beginning”.

Jewish tradition says mankind began on this day.

A half-shekel had to be paid by all to the Lord as a memorial of redemption.

The silver trumpets used in the Temple were no longer used after its destruction in AD 70.

Trumpets announced God’s descent on Sinai, at Jericho, and as a symbol of the ram Abraham offered in place of Isaac.

After *Rosh Hashanah* are the ten Days of Awe (*Yamin Noraim*), during which introspection and good deeds take place before Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement).

The service has three parts:

(i) Malkiyot (Kingships).

(ii) Zikhronot (Remembrance).

(iii) Shofarot (blowing the shofar).

Some also observe *Tashlich* (“to cast”) by going to the sea or a river and casting in bread crumbs on the first day. This tradition began in the fifteenth century.

Tum’ah is “filthiness”.

In the late 70s, General Electric had to recall 487 pacemakers because of a defective part.

VI) The Day of Atonement (pp. 124-147)

Along with Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur is a High Holy Day (the only two).

Tradition states three books are opened at New Year’s: for the absolute wicked who won’t have their names written in the Book of Life for the next year, the absolutely perfect who will, and the rest. The ten days till Yom Kippur are the chance for the ordinary group to move to the perfect group.

Fasting, while not mandated by scripture, has become a tradition, so the day is called “the fast”.

Some rabbis now believe the Bible provides atonement without a bloody sacrifice due to the temple’s destruction, however any flour offering had to be offered with an existing burnt offering (cf. Lv 5.12).

In I Kn 8.46-9 the exiles (including Daniel) were commanded to pray toward their land, and the place of blood sacrifice.

Sacrifices were meant to teach the severity of sin; that it kills. They also functioned like promissory notes that Jesus paid off.

Teshuvah means “repentance”.

Kippur means to cover.

The root for Shabbat is *yashav*, or sitting down.

This is the day Israel is reconciled to God as a nation.

VII) The Feast of Booths (pp. 148-177)

Sukkot is the final feast of Leviticus 23, also known as Tabernacles.

A *sukkah* is a frail, three-sided temporary dwelling.

The Four Species are waived towards the four corners of the earth (palm, myrtle, willow, and citron; cf. Lv 23.40).

In the Millennial Kingdom, those nations not celebrating Sukkot will not receive rain for a year.

The seventy bulls sacrificed during the seven days of celebration are seen in Jewish tradition as representing the nations of the world. Each day, a *cohen* would collect water in a golden vessel from the Pool of Siloam for the temple. On the seventh day he would do the same, but circle the altar in the temple seven times. This water pouring symbolised the giving of the Holy Spirit.

On the first day, a 75-foot candlestick was erected in the Court of the Women, where the poor widow cast in her mite. Candle wicks were made from the priest's old garments. On the eighth day lights were extinguished for a solemn and holy assembly; this is the day Jesus went up to the temple.

The present age is called *Olam HaZeh*, the future *Olam HaBa'ah*.

The 15thC Cathedral in Florence has a small aperture in the top of its dome where on the 21st of June each year light enters in striking a brass floor plate. If the light was to not reflect engineers would know the foundations have shifted.

Ray Charles was said to live in his house without the lights on.

Trumpets is the gathering of the Body of Messiah.

Yom Kippur is the gathering of Israel.

Sukkot is the gathering of all the nations to glorify Jesus.

VIII) The Feast of Dedication (pp. 178-195)

This was setup by tradition on Kislev 25, 165 BC as a memorial to the purification and rededication of the temple after its defilement of Antiochus Epiphanes, King of Syria. He sacrificed a pig on the altar to Zeus, and proceeded to Hellenise the Jews.

The Maccabees Rebellion, under Matthias Maccabee and his five sons, drove out the Syrian army after three years.

Hanukkah means dedication and is eight days long because of a legend regarding the oil in the temple; there was only enough for one day to fuel the menorah (*hanukiyah*), but it somehow lasted for eight. This probably originated in the time of the Romans. The duration was probably copied from Sukkot.

A children's game with a four-sided dice called *dreidel* is played; each letter forms an acrostic for "A Great Miracle Happened [T]here".

The *hanukiyah* has nine candles; the *shamash* (servant) is used to light the other eight.

Hanukkah is mentioned in John 10.22-3 where Jesus was at the temple in the winter.

IX The Feast of Purim (pp. 196-221)

On the 14th of *Adar* (usually in March).

Purim means "lots", or the casting of dies to determine the date of the Jew's death.

Traditions include chanting the entire Esther Scroll and performing a play (*Purimshpil*).

King Ahaseurus (or Xerxes) ruled Persia 486-465BC.

Esther was known as Haddassah. God is never mentioned once in the book.

Events take place fifty years after Cyrus' decree for the Jews to return, yet many had stayed abroad and disobeyed.

Haman was a descendant of Agag, while Mordecai was related to Saul [via Shimei and Kish], so they inherited the ancient feud between the Amalekites and the Israelites.

During David's flight from his son Absalom, Shimei cursed him, but was later pardoned. However, Solomon had him put to death in his old age.

Epilogue-Should We Keep the Feasts Today? (pp. 222-227)