

Examining Judaism (2)

Last week we examined the Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread, and Pentecost. Continuing with our study, we will highlight other Jewish feast mentioned in Bible.

Trumpets

On the first day of the Seventh month Tishri (our October), the Israelites were to observe a Sabbath rest: a memorial of the blowing trumpets. (Leviticus 23:24)

Not much is known about this feast except what is recorded in Leviticus and Numbers 29:1-6. Its significance may be in the use of the trumpet. It was used as a means of sounding out warnings. Nehemiah told the workers to blow their trumpet if they were attacked and every man would come to their aid.

The fellowship of the saints is similar. We are obligated to encourage and strengthen one another. In times of distress we can call for help call for help and brethren in Christ will come to our aid.

Tabernacles

On the fifteenth day of the 7th month, the Jews were to leave their homes and dwell in tents. (Leviticus 23:24ff) This was also called the feast of booths. The Jewish word for booth, *cukkah*, means a hut made with twigs or branches. For seven days they were to live in those tents. All customary work was to cease and sacrifice were offered each day. (Numbers 29:12-38)

Each year this was observed to teach each generation how God brought the children of Israel out of the wilderness. It is mentioned in John 7:3 when the Jews planned to kill Jesus during their observance.

The Jews needed to be reminded just as we need to contemplate the blessing we receive as we sojourn this life He has given us.

Feast of Dedication

This is one of two feasts mentioned in the Bible that were established after the Law was given in the wilderness. We read nothing of the Feast of Dedication in the Old Testament. During the time between the Old and New Testaments, secular history tells of a man named Judas who was the leader the Israelites. On one occasion, an army of 65,000 men came to conquer Israel. Judas led an army of 10,000 men to victory.

"Now that our enemies have been crushed, let us go up to purify the sanctuary and rededicate it.) (1 Maccabees 4:36) Upon entering Jerusalem, they found the alter in disarray. Judas immediately put men to work in restoring the temple. "For eight days they celebrated the dedication of the alter and joyfully offered holocausts and sacrifices of deliverance and praise." (1Maccabbes 4:56) This celebration occurred on the 25th day of Chislev (December).

The Gospel of John briefly mentions the festival. "Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem and it was winter." (John10:22) Jesus took this opportunity to teach the great crowd gathered. Due to His calling "God His Father" the Jews tried to stone Jesus. He escaped as they tried to arrest Him.

Feast of Purim

This feast was not mentioned in the Law of Moses either. Ester, a Jewish daughter became Queen in the days of King Ahasuerus. Keep in mind this was during the days of captivity and the Jews were living in strange lands.

A servant by name of Haman hated Ester's Uncle Mordecai to the point he persuaded the King to kill all the Jews. "In the first month, which is the first month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast (Pur- that is the lot), before Haman to determine the day and month, until it fell on the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar". (Esther 3:7)

Mordecai brought this to Ether's attention and told her to approach the King. She convinced Ahasuerus that Haman was an evil man and his hatred would deprive the King of his best servants. Haman was hanged and a decree was sent out allowing the Jews to gather in every city. Those who assaulted the Jews were put to death.

Mordecai wrote letters to all the Jews establishing a yearly feast on the 14th and 15th days of Adar (March). It was to remember the rest they had from their enemies. (Esther 9:22) In 2 Maccabees this is referred to as "Mordecai's Day". (15:36)

The Feast of Purim or Esther is not specifically referred to in the New Testament but some believe John 5:1 alludes to it. -- Dennis Tucker

(To Be Continued)