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Bible Explorations Newsletter

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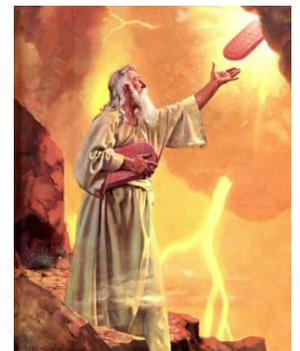
LOOK WHO'S INVITED

By Ted Schultz

In our previous study we saw that the parable of the great supper as well as the parable of the wedding garment illustrate the gospel invitation which the Jewish people rejected. *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 307. These parables illustrate the purpose for which the sacred feasts were given to God's covenant people. These annual gatherings were given as object lessons and as spiritual blessings not only for the Jews but for the whole world. "The spiritual blessings [of the "sacred feasts"] given to Israel were not for themselves alone. God had given the bread of life to them, that they might break it to the world." *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 219, 220. Nearly fifteen hundred years before Jesus gave the parable of the great supper He instructed Moses in regard to the feasts.

COMMANDED TO PROCLAIM AS HOLY

"Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, *Concerning* the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim *to be* holy convocations, even these are my feasts." Lev. 23:2. Notice that the Lord instructed that the feasts of the Lord were to be proclaimed holy convocations. Many today are instead proclaiming that they are *not* holy convocations. It is now being taught that these holy convocations are nothing more than a common work day. Let us each one on this point be charitable toward everyone. For most of those who now observe the holy convocations it could well be said that they too did not always do so. Further, they are *still* growing in their understanding of these things and in a very great many other things besides. We may ask about those who now observe the holy convocations, were they any less sincere in their walk with God when they did not observe the holy convocations? We think not!



HOLY OR UNHOLY?

It was because of the prevailing ignorance of the people that the priests were to teach the difference between the holy and the unholy. "And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane [common], and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean." Eze. 44:23. It is now being taught that the feasts had been

instituted for the making of sacrifices only, but we have seen from Christ's parables of the wedding feast that this is not so. In fact when we compare the parable of the marriage feast to the feasts of the Lord in Leviticus 23 some truly amazing things come to light.

God had commanded Israel that the feasts of the Lord were to be proclaimed holy convocations. The Hebrew word for proclaim is **qara** (Strong's #7121) which means to call out to (address by name), that are bidden, call forth, cry unto, guest, invite, publish, proclaim. Notice the words call, bidden, cry unto, guest, and invite. These terms remind us of the parables of the great supper (Luke 14:15-24), the marriage feast (Matt. 22:1-14), and of the ten virgins (Matt. 25:1-13). Jesus said, "And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come." Matt. 22:3. The words call and bidden are the same Greek word *kaleo* (Strong's #2564) which means to bid, to call (forth). In other words God's servants, the Jews, were to call the called to the marriage feast. The Jews had been called by God more than once. They had been called out of Egypt and later they were called out of Babylon. When He called them out of Egypt He reestablished the sacred feasts which were to be proclaimed holy convocations. Also when He called them out of Babylon He reestablished His law among them with the annual feasts and Sabbaths. During the feast of trumpets the book of the law was read to the people. "So they read in the book of the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." Neh. 8:8. The people were reminded of how God had miraculously delivered them from their slavery in Egypt and how the law was given to them at Sinai. "Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, and good statutes and commandments: and madest known unto them thy holy Sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant." Neh. 9:13, 14. The people were reminded that they had cast the law behind their backs, and had slain the prophets. Neh. 9:26. The people were made to clearly understand that there were conditions upon which they would receive the blessings of God.

The history of the Hebrew people is one of continual forgetfulness of the terms of the covenant and the conditions that applied to the fulfillment of the covenant promises made by Jehovah to them. To guard against this ever present danger to forgetfulness God instituted holy convocations. The Hebrew word for convocation is **miqrah** (Strong's #4744) which defines it as "something called out, i.e. a public meeting (the act, the person, or place); also a **rehearsal**:—assembly, calling, convocation, reading. So we see that in the Hebrew language the words for proclaim and convocation are by their definitions closely connected. As one follows the *miqrah* throughout the book of the law, it becomes apparent that all the various meanings for *miqrah* can

apply at one and the same time—both to the people and to the scheduled events to which they have been invited.

We have yet one more key word found in connection with the words proclaim (**qara**) and convocation (**miqrah**) in Lev. 23:2 and that is the word feast. The word feast is translated from the Hebrew word **moed** (Strong's #4150) which means "a fixed time or season, an assembly (as convened for a definite purpose), technically the congregation; by extension, the place of meeting; also a signal, an appointed sign or time, assembly, feast, and set time." These three terms enshrined within the book of the law define God's covenant people. The Lord gave them holy convocations because they were to be a holy people. All three of these terms overlap each other in their meanings. It is as though God was purposefully driving home a key point in such a way that the point could not be missed unless one set themselves to miss it on purpose.

A PEOPLE CALLED OUT



God was calling the children of Israel "out of the land of Egypt" (Lev. 22:33) to be His covenant people. It is claimed that the holy convocations were for the Jews only as part of the old covenant—that it was given to those who were "called out of the land of Egypt", but are not for His New Testament church. We direct those of that persuasion once again to the book of the law. "I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of

Egypt, out of the house of bondage." Exodus 20:2. These words which are the same as those of Lev. 22:33 are part of the Decalogue. Are we to conclude therefore that the Ten Commandments were for those only who came out of Egypt and not for the New Testament church? We have seen in previous studies that the commandments, statutes, and judgments were the terms of the covenant that God extended to His people. The condition of being God's covenant people and His holy nation was based upon whether they would obey the terms of the covenant. "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation." Exodus 19:5, 6.

His holy nation was not only to keep His holy convocations, but they were to proclaim them as well. By Israel's proclamation of and participation in the holy convocations (*miqrah*) they identified themselves as God's called out ones (*miqrah*). Let us remember that

these holy convocations in which they participated weekly and annually were a **rehearsal** (miqrah).

What does it mean to rehearse? Webster's gives the following meanings; "to say it again, repeat, to recite, to recount, to train or make proficient, to perform or practice."

THE MIQRAH REHEARSALS

The miqrah rehearsals of the holy convocations were not only commemorative of things past, and prophetic of things future, they were special practice and training events called by God to help them remember that they were God's covenant people called to a special position and work in the earth. They were called out to prepare themselves and others for the great future event spoken of by the prophet John. "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." Rev. 19:7-8. Then follows the miqrah; "And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are **they which are called** to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God." Rev. 19:9. The miqrah are the called out ones that have been rehearsing for the royal wedding by keeping God's sacred appointments and spending special holy time with Jesus during the holy convocations. During these special appointments the people have been learning more and more about the great plan of redemption with each successive holy convocation throughout the year unfolding certain facets of that plan to them.

THE NEW TESTAMENT MIQRAH

So did the miqrah cease to exist at the cross? To say it did, is to say that Christ's church ceased to exist at the cross. The apostle Peter did not believe the miqrah ceased at the cross. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; [Peter is virtually quoting Exodus 19:5, 6.] that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath **called you out** [the miqrah] of darkness into his marvelous light: which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had obtained mercy." 1 Peter 2:9-10.

HEBREW MIQRAH=GREEK EKKLESIA

It is interesting how Peter resorts to the law of Moses to define the New Testament church. Peter said, "Ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called [kaleo] you out [ek] darkness into his marvelous light." 1 Peter 2:9. The two words called (kaleo) and out (ek) when put together form the word ekklesia which is the Greek word for church throughout the New Testament. The Greek word kaleo (Strong's #2564) means to call. The Greek word ek (Strong's #1537) denotes origin—the point

whence motion or action proceeds from in the sense of place, time or cause—literally or figuratively. The bringing of these two words together to form the word ekklesia (Strong's #1577) means a calling out, a popular meeting, a religious congregation, and an assembly.

These definitions for ekklesia are the very definitions for the words miqrah and moed in Leviticus 23! The concept of the called out ones is unbreakably linked to their rehearsal of the holy convocations. To do away with the holy convocations is in fact to do away with the called out ones (the church)—according to the definitions of the



terms which are given us in both the Old and New Testaments. The holy convocations are a congregation assembled together at God's appointed times to rehearse for the marriage to the Lamb. The holy convocations are not only special times and events, they are an assembly of people. One was it could be said is that they are feasters feasting on the Lord's feast days. We must remember that these feasts are to be proclaimed holy convocations and that it is not only the annual events that are feasts but the seventh day Sabbath is a feast as well. Lev. 23:2, 3.

From the beginning Satan worked to cause the Lord's covenant people anciently to forget the statutes, and to bring them to a point that they even abhorred and despised God's statutes! Lev. 26:15, 43. The history of Satan's effort to put Sunday in the place of the Seventh-day Sabbath is a history that is directly linked to Satan's effort to do away with the sacred feasts of Scripture. Let us review briefly a few statements from history to illustrate this point.

"From Rome there came another addition to the sun-worshipping apostasy. The first Christians being mostly Jews, continued to celebrate the Passover in remembrance of the death of Christ, the true Passover, and this was continued among those who among the Gentiles had turned to Christ. Accordingly, the celebration was always on the Passover day,—the fourteenth of the first month. Rome, however, and from her all the West, *adopted the day of the sun* as the day of this celebration. According to the Eastern custom, the celebration, being on the fourteenth day of the month, would of course fall on different days of the week as the years revolved. The rule of Rome was that the celebration must always be on Sunday—the Sunday nearest to the fourteenth day of the first month of the Jewish year. And if the fourteenth day of that month should itself be a Sunday, then the celebration was not to be held on that day, but upon the next Sunday. We know not precisely when this began, but it was practiced in Rome as early as the time of Sixtus I, who was bishop of Rome A.D. 119-128. The practice was

promoted by his successors, and Anicetus, who was Bishop of Rome A.D. 157-168..." Alonzo Trevier Jones, *The Great Empires of Prophecy*, p. 383.

Rome first worked to subvert the annual feast statutes and from that vantage point then worked to subvert the seventh day Sabbath of the Decalogue. Most of the professed Christian world today has forgotten the seventh day Sabbath of the fourth commandment. And where did it all begin? By causing the annual feast statutes to be forgotten. Ancient Israel repeatedly forgot the annual feast statutes to a point that any effort by the prophets to cause the people to remember those statutes was met with lethal force.

HISTORY IS REPEATING

God says, "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy...the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God." Ex. 20:8, 10. Most of the Christian world today responds with "forget it." God says, "Remember ye the law of Moses...with the statutes and judgments." Mal. 4:4. Most of the Christian world responds with "forget it." God commanded the feasts of the Lord to be proclaimed holy convocations. Lev. 23:2, 3. Almost all of the Christian world responds with "forget it." But God has His miqrah that remembers the things that God said to remember. Why is it that the miqrah remember the things that God commanded while the rest of the professed Christian world is forgetting? Because they have been actively rehearsing the things that God said to rehearse. After all, they *are* the miqrah—the ones that rehearse. The miqrah are the called out assembled ones who are continually rehearsing the things that God commanded to be rehearsed. It is the miqrah that says, "Come, and **let us join ourselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.**" Jer. 50:5. The miqrah fulfill the command of God to repair the breach that has been made in the law of God. The miqrah under the working of the Holy Spirit stand before the world as reformers and show that the law of God is the foundation of all enduring reform. "**In the time of the end every divine institution is to be restored.**" *Prophets and Kings*, p.678.

The miqrah, like Nehemiah, carry out this work of restoration. It is through the ministry of the miqrah working in harmony with the Holy Spirit that every divine institution will be restored. To the miqrah "will be fulfilled all the covenant promises made by Jehovah to His ancient people." PK 714. Why is it that all the covenant promises of Jehovah will be fulfilled in the miqrah? Because they have complied with all the conditions of the everlasting covenant. It is the miqrah that will be the church triumphant. Do you want to be a member of the church triumphant? It is within the reach of everyone to be a member of that celebrated company. It is given to everyone the opportunity to say yes to God and be a part of His glorious covenant people. The terms and

conditions of the covenant that He offers to us are clear and definite so that all can understand them. Have we read and studied that contract for ourselves or are we just following the impressions and opinions of others as to what the terms and conditions of the contract are? The privileges and blessings of this covenant are everlasting. What is there that could be of more value than everlasting bliss with our Creator and Redeemer? Say yes to Him and enter into His covenant just now.

WEATHER STILL MAKING RECORDS!



There has been record cold temperatures on the east coast, including Florida (don't people go to Florida for the winter?). While the east is having record snow, ice and freezing temperatures, California has had record fires and floods.

The largest ever California wildfire swept through Ventura and Santa Barbara County last month. The Thomas Fire has burned an estimated 281,620 acres — more than 440 square miles — and destroyed more than 1,000 structures, from multimillion-dollar homes to telephone poles and garages. Another 280 structures have been damaged, firefighters said.

Below is one of many pictures of a hillside completely burned. These photos were shot by our good friend Patty McDaniel. Patty lives in Santa Barbara and has witnessed the mass destruction. We thank our Father for protecting her and her home.



Below is another picture Patty took. What a beautiful and yet scary picture! That glow above the lights near the water.



The rest of the pictures below were taken by photographer Mike Eliason. We thank him and Patty for letting us use their photos in our newsletter.



This is the Thomas Fire from a front yard!

With all of the acres of vegetation and trees burned away, when the rain hit not long after the fire, there was nothing but floods of water carrying mud and huge boulders off the mountains and taking some of the houses with it. There were houses that made it through the fire just to be swept away in the muddy flood cascading down from the mountains!



Above is the 101 Freeway in Santa Barbara County which has turned into a flood of mud and debris.





A semi stuck in the mud on Highway 101.



For all those frustrated and wondering how long the 101 freeway is going to be closed. This is the freeway and the sign welcoming to Montecito. The sign itself is 8 feet tall. I would imagine the freeway pillars 16 ft. Photo credit: [Mike Eliason](#). For those of you across the country: this is the 101 Freeway that connects some folk to Southern California (there is a back way that takes 5 hours for a drive that would be 45 mins on freeway).



Someone will need a new car!



The above picture of the huge boulder with the men on it shows you the massive force of the muddy water bringing all of this down from the mountain tops sweeping away everything in its path. That is a huge rock!

Is God trying to wake us up?



Are we listening?

SATELLITE NEWS



Where do we stand with the Satellite programs? Our friends at the Satellite company are helping us in any way they can. So here is the current plan:

GloryStar (U.S./Canada), instead of a full year's contract will run for another six months. Australia and New Zealand, instead of a year, will also phase out in six months. South Africa will be phased out in three months from March.

We thank you all for your support in the satellite project. We will let you know of any changes, but as far as we can see this is as far as we can extend the satellite programs. In the past, our 7 day/24 hours per day has been a blessing to hundreds of folk around the world, but with the loss of a major contributor we are simply running out of funds for the project and are stretching them out the best we can. We will continue to be on 24/7 on our website, Roku, etc.

We are grateful to our supporters we have had over the years for this and for the satellite folk that have supported us in this phasing out of our satellite programming.

We are looking forward to a GREAT Feast of Passover here in Terra Bella this coming spring (April 29 (evening) through May 7). Most of the speakers are selected and ready to give us their best, musicians are tuning up, and the Lord is surely invited. See you then.

REPEATED PROPHECIES IN DANIEL AND THE REVELATION

By Elder VanDenburgh with SOP

“A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The judgment was set, and the books were opened.”

The above Scriptures are most often applied to the beginning of the judgment of the dead in 1844. Notice Ellen White’s statement:

“...The work of judgment, which began in 1844, must continue until the cases of all are decided, both of the living and the dead; hence it will extend to the closer of human probation.” AFTER 1844.

“When the judgment shall sit, and the books shall be opened, and every man shall be judged according to the things written in the books. Then the tables of stone, hidden by God until that day, will be presented before the world as the standard of righteousness.” RH January 28, 1909.

NOTE: “When the judgment shall sit” refers to some phase of the investigative judgment. Not the second coming. But rather to a time with the judgment is sitting in session.

“Then men and women will see that the prerequisite of their salvation is obedience to the perfect law of God. None will find excuse for sin. By the righteous principles of that law, men will receive their sentence of life or death.” RH January 28, 1909.

QUESTION: If the judgment of 1844 did sit, as we have correctly taught, then what is this judgment that shall sit? Please notice it once again, this time from IT100:

“The church must be purged, and it will be. God reigns, let the people praise Him. I have not the most distant thought of sinking down. I mean to be right and do right. The judgment is to sit, the books are to be opened, and we are to be judged according to our deeds.”

Could it be that judgment has convened with each successive generation since 1844, and convenes for the last time with the final generation? The next quotation may suggest just such a thought:

In the time of the end – the time in which we are now living -- the vision was to speak and not lie.

“Beginning with those who first lived upon the earth, our Advocate presents the case of each successive generation, and closes with the living.” GC 483

Regardless, there are numerous quotes to let us know a certain phase of investigative judgment would be in session yet future from her day:

“Those who would have the benefits of the Savior’s mediation should permit nothing to interfere with their duty to perfect holiness in the fear of God...how important then that every mind contemplate the solemn scene when the judgment shall sit, and the books shall be opened, ...GC 488

QUESTION: What judgment is about to begin?

“...now, when the great work of judging the living is about to begin, shall we allow unsanctified ambition to take possession of the heart and lead us to neglect the education required to meet the need in this day of peril? 6T130 “We are nearing the judgment, and those who bear the message of warning to the world must have clean hands and pure hearts.” TM 426

NOTE: The importance of this future judgment and the opening of the books is emphasized in RH Dec. 16, 1890. (well this side of 1844). “The Lord reads every secret of the heart. He knows all things. You may now close the book of your remembrance, in order to escape confessing your sins; but when the judgment shall sit, and the books shall be opened, you cannot close them. The recording angel has testified that which is true.”

Notice the investigative phase of the judgment to come includes, or may even be preceded by, the purging of the church:

“...as we near the judgment, all will manifest their true character, and it will be made plain to what company they belong. The sieve is moving. Let us not say ‘stay Thy hand, O God.’ The church must be purged, and it will be.” IT100

NOTE: It would be easy to conclude that the church will be purged just prior to the judgment of the living. Maybe that’s why Peter wrote: Judgment begins at the house of the Lord. If the church is not purged just prior to the judgment of the living, then it is surely purged at the beginning of it.

Most of us have believed that most everything recorded by Daniel was fulfilled prior to 1844. About all that was left was the 2nd coming.

“...the prophetic visions of Daniel and John foretell a period of moral darkness and declension; but at the time of the end, -- the time in which we are now living -- the vision was to speak, and not lie.” 5T9,10.

(Prophets often thought they were living in the end times.) In the next statement she indicates some of Daniel has never been fulfilled at all.

“...The prophecies present a succession of events leading down to the opening of the judgment (1844). This is especially true of the book of Daniel. But that part of his prophecy which related to the last days, Daniel was bidden to close up and seal “to the time of the end.” CG356

“The book that was sealed was not the book of Revelation, but that portion of the prophecy of Daniel which related to the last days.”

“...The book of Daniel is unsealed in the revelation to John and carries us forward (not backward) to the last scenes of this earth’s history.” TM115

The Price Has Been Fixed...

By Charmaine Vierra

Can you imagine for a moment if every time you went into a department store to purchase something there were no price tags, and it was up to you to determine the price? Would you be willing to genuinely ascertain the value of the merchandise and pay in full? If you are like most of us, you would more than likely forget what’s fair and opt to get it as cheap as possible.

I want to remind you that bargaining for your soul is not an option. An all-wise God has set the price tag on our souls. It is so high a price that God calls us to meditate on Calvary and the “precious blood of Christ” to ransom our souls.

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR US TODAY?

It means that a price tag has been affixed to each one of us. The entire universe belongs to God, and He took all of that and emptied it out for one. You. While it is impossible to wrap the mind around that, it is equally impossible to do any bargaining with God. You see He lost His most precious possession to purchase you. Hopefully, you will allow this to settle into your heart, and contemplate what that really means.

Paul says, “That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor (I Thessalonians 4:4)”. The Hebrew word for honor is derived from the idea of value, and to esteem in the highest dignity.

As this New Year begins, how do you plan to treat yourself and others around you that are stamped with the same price tag? Many of you have known the health message

for years, but are only faintly motivated to apply its principles to your life. You may feel it to be a burden, unattainable, or simple outdated. You may think it unimportant, but if you consider the price tag on yourself, then the faithful care and keeping of yourself becomes a matter of epic proportions.

I would like to challenge you today. Take a moment to consider the price of your soul, and get a piece of paper and a pen and faithfully write down what should be accepted and disposed of in your life based on that price tag. Now take that list to prayer. With all your heart ask God to help you to order your life with the highest value, and to perform the things in your life that are necessary to bring about the highest honor to God. Thank Him for doing what you have requested in the name of His Son Jesus. Amen.



It isn’t enough just to do this one time. We humans are prone to forgetfulness. Take this before the throne of God daily. Every day make it a part of your life to do it. If you have a spouse or family member that wishes to join you in presenting a shared petition before God, do it. God loves families, and He blesses us greatly when we bring our requests in community and harmony.

If you think there is some other magical formula that is going to transform your daily habits and presto 1-2-3-Whella! You are now fit and fabulous! There is a far greater power in realizing you simply cannot do it yourself, and that you must look and live!

God has promised, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” (Luke 18:9-13).”

Today, God says, “Do you hear my voice speaking to your heart? Come and allow me to show you how much you are worth to Me. Let me show the price tag.”

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