

WESTERN WATCHMAN

NEWS AND COMMENTARY PENTECOST SUPPLEMENT, MAY 2010

“Except the LORD build the house, they labor in vain that build it; except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.” Psalm 127:1.

Titus 2:11-13: For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and Saviour Jesus Christ ...

Hebrews 10:24-25: And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works; Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

For the past few days I have been receiving messages form a variety of sources stating that the return of Jesus for His Church is very close, maybe as soon as a few days or weeks from this writing. If nothing else, such warnings should be regarded as alerts to be ready, keep looking up, anticipate with joy the fulfillment of the Blessed Hope spoken of in the above text, and encourage others to be ready also. Consideration of the spring Feast of Pentecost is offered for discussion because it is not only historic, but also prophetic.

Those few who have read *Western Watchman* since the first letter was issued July 2002 following the disastrous Hayman Fire in Colorado have been familiar with messages repeated time and time again about end-time events. Apart from the significance of news concerning the Jewish State of Israel (God’s time piece), one theme repeated frequently is the immanency of the return of Jesus to catch away His Bride (the Church) with a meeting the air: I Thessalonians 4:17. This was done because Jesus Himself and the apostles who wrote much of the New Testament including Paul, John, Peter and Jude and who testified of the resurrected Jesus under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, wrote and commanded the followers of Jesus to be ready for this event. This message was received by the First Century Church and it is now known that many, if not most Christians alive during that century expected Jesus to return at that time. To me this sounds like very convincing company and my strong advice to readers is understand the apostles’ writings so that the time of His appearing doesn’t come upon a Church totally unaware: Luke 21:34.

One section of Scripture that most of the Church has ignored or avoided are the historic and prophetic implications of the Spring and Fall Feasts of the Lord, described in Leviticus 23. Many in the Church believe that these Feasts were handed down to Israel during the time of Moses, recorded in the Old Testament and only for the descendants of Israel. This is unfortunate, because the Spring and Fall Feasts provide historic and prophetic acknowledgement of the person of the Lord Jesus – the God we love and serve

– and many blessings have been missed by the Church when their significance is overlooked or avoided just because we comprise a New Testament body of believers. In fact these feasts may all but pinpoint the season Jesus will call the Church home. Recall that Paul wrote this inspiring verse highlighting the importance of Old Testament Scripture: *For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope:* Romans 15:4. Yes, Old Testament Scripture **does** provide hope if we take the time to read and study it.

An exhaustive study of the Feasts is not possible here. It would be a good topic for a Bible study particularly if overseen by a Messianic Jewish believer in *Yeshua* Jesus. For now one may summarize that the Spring Feasts recorded in Leviticus 23 are historic, and the Fall Feasts are yet prophetic. The Spring Feasts had their fulfillment in the events surrounding Jesus' first coming as a suffering servant: Isaiah 52:14 through 53:12. The Fall Feasts have their fulfillment at His second coming to earth as Lion of the tribe of Judah, King of kings and Lord of lords: Revelation 5:5 and 19:11-15. In this letter let us focus our attention to the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) or in Hebrew, *Shavuot*. This Feast is both historic and prophetic. It is historic because the first Pentecost of the Church Age occurred in the First Century AD 50 days after Jesus rose from the dead and 10 days after He ascended into heaven: Acts 1:1-11. It is prophetic because the Church Age that began on that Pentecost **has not ended**. As this is written the Church Age is still ongoing even as the clock ticks ahead. The Church Age will not end until the blessed Bride of Christ – those who have been looking for Jesus throughout their lives and have made themselves ready, be they living or dead – will be caught up to meet Him in the clouds and taken to heaven to appear at the judgment seat to receive rewards and Marriage Supper: I Thessalonians 4:15-18; II Corinthians 5:10 and Revelation 19:7-9. This event completes the Blessed Hope of the believer: Titus 2:13.

For many years, especially the last 30 years, speculation has run high as to when this event, often called the Rapture of the Saints, will actually occur. With the speculation has come an increasing awareness of the significance of the Spring and Fall Feasts. Some writers have urged their readers to be on the alert during the time of both the Spring and Fall Feasts because of the historic and prophetic aspects mentioned above. Others have highlighted one Feast in particular – the Feast of Trumpets, also known as Yom Teruah or Rosh Hashana. The main reason this Feast has received so much attention is because of the importance of the blowing of trumpets in association with the Rapture texts of I Thessalonians 4:16 and I Corinthians 15:52. Also the texts suggest that the trumpet blown to call the saints home is “the trump of God”, distinguished from other trumpet blasts occurring in the book of Revelation from Chapters 8 through 11 which are blown by angels. This alone has added significance. An angel cannot blow a trumpet intended for the use of God alone. He alone can raise the believing dead incorruptible and change mortal bodies to immortal. On the other hand, some discount the significance of trumpet blowing since horns are blown frequently in Israel for many reasons other than just the Feast Day observances. One may hear a trumpet blowing announcing the weekly Sabbath observance near sundown on a Friday, or for other reasons prescribed by a rabbi serving in a local synagogue. Old Testament watchmen

used trumpets to warn of danger approaching from outside the walls of a city. Still, the Feast of Trumpets is important from one prophetic standpoint: whether or not the Church is called home at that time, it is clear that the blowing of horns is a solemn warning to Israel that God is about to deal with the nation in judgment, “the time of Jacob’s trouble” of Jeremiah 30:7, the 70th Week in Daniel 9:24-27 and elsewhere. The judgments following result in a remnant Israel being saved with the 144,000 Jews sealed for the Tribulation: Romans 11:26, Revelation 7:3-8.

Some have provided that the period of time between the Spring Feast of Pentecost and the Fall Feast of Trumpets is symbolic of the mysterious time period called the Church Age. The Church Age was a mystery to Israel since the First Century and apparently remains a mystery even to the Church in this era of time. During this period, amounting to just under 2,000 years God has been calling out a body of believers, both Jew and Gentile, to share the good news confirming that Jesus’ first coming is a historic fact and that the prophetic second coming could occur at any time. The Gospel message was always the same: Jesus fulfilled the role of suffering servant/Messiah at His first coming with his death, burial and resurrection; his appearance to Mary Magdalene (John 20:14-16), the disciples (Luke 24:13-40), about 500 others and finally Paul the apostle: Acts 9:3-6, I Corinthians 15:1-8. Jew and Gentile alike were instructed what they must do to be saved: Acts 2:38-39 and 3:19 (for Jews); Acts 16:31 (for Gentiles) and Romans 10:9-13 (for all).

Waves of persecution in the millennia followed the Gospel message as it spread across the globe. In spite of the persecution and frequent episodes of martyrdom, true believers had these things in common: the blessed hope of Jesus return and a staunch belief in the word of God. Even today, many in Communist and Muslim nations are coming to faith in Jesus as the Word of God is spread abroad into these areas. There is no force on earth that can stop the actions of the Holy Spirit and Word of God.

So you may ask, “Okay Watchman, when is it going to occur? From (our) reckoning all Watchmen are is just a bunch of hired public servants strutting up and down atop a wall day and night with a telescope in one hand and a horn (Hebrew, *shofar*) in the other, eating boxes of donuts and guzzling barrels of coffee looking for trouble that never comes to the good ole’ USA”. **Hold the phone.** Trouble **has** arrived to the good ole’ USA. Does September 11, 2001 ring a bell? Do you really suppose this was coincidence? What about the economic collapses and downturns across the world since September 2008 and that continue today? Does Greece ring a bell? How about the current Administration’s very rough treatment of the Jewish State of Israel and its Prime Minister? Do you want five additional pages of “coincidences?” Well, go ahead. Let the Watchman make your day. The nation is still asleep and overcharged with surfeiting, drunkenness and the cares of this life, so one may wonder what our Father in heaven may allow or implement to get the nation’s attention: Luke 21:34-36.

Back to the original question – when? Well, I don’t know the specific day or hour. Jesus said this first and that settles it. He told us to be ready. But awareness of the Feasts of

Israel **may help** pinpoint the date the Church is called home. As discussed above, there is a growing awareness of the Feast Days, their historic and prophetic implications. And we already know from the Acts of the Apostles that the Church Age began on a Pentecost in the First Century A.D. Is it unreasonable to say that the Church Age could also end on Pentecost, this year or some future year? What about this year for instance?

Well, if you asked that question, I will attempt a satisfactory answer. To know when Pentecost occurs in 2010, one must first know the day Passover was observed. According to Leviticus 23, Passover is observed beginning at sundown on the 14th day of the 1st month (Nisan) in the Hebrew calendar. This year Passover began at sundown March 29. The feast of Unleavened Bread, a day observed much like the weekly Sabbath, occurs at sundown on Nisan 15, 24 hours after Passover begins. Unleavened Bread lasts 7 days beyond the Passover. The next Feast Day is Firstfruits, a celebration that begins at sundown after the first weekly Sabbath after Passover. This year Firstfruits should have begun at sundown April 3. Pentecost occurs 50 days after Firstfruits. So this year Pentecost should be observed on Sunday, May 23.

One word of caution: most 2010 Hebrew calendars have placed Firstfruits after the high Sabbath that marks the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, or only 48 hours after the beginning of Passover. According to Leviticus 23, Firstfruits is supposed to begin after completion of the weekly Sabbath, not after a high Sabbath (unless both occur on the same day). So these calendars have Firstfruits observed four days early. The same is true for Pentecost – the calendars have this Feast also beginning four days early.

Why the apparent discrepancy? One possible explanation is that since 70 AD, Israel has been without a Temple and the usual observances involving Temple worship could no longer be kept. Also, in the Diaspora (dispersion of the Jewish people after 70 A.D.) certain traditions may have crept into practice and replaced some of the commandments in Leviticus 23, including how the Spring Feasts are celebrated and when. Modern calendars show Passover and Unleavened Bread observed concurrently for a week whereas Leviticus 23 identifies these Feasts as separate and not concurrent.

Finally, a word about what is meant by “no one knowing the day or hour” Jesus will call the Church home. First, both Hebrew and Julian calendars recognize a 24-hour day, so the Rapture could occur anytime within this time frame. Also, it is important to consider Jerusalem as the focal point for events of Biblical significance. Each day on the Hebrew calendar begins at sundown. If sundown occurs at 7:30 p.m. in Jerusalem, it is 10:30 a.m. in Denver. In East Asia sundown occurs about 8 hours before it occurs in Jerusalem. Calendars have undergone changes over time for a wide variety of reasons. Finally, rotation of the earth has also fluctuated over time, demonstrating that time is not the constant usually assumed. No wonder Jesus simply said, Watch: Mark 13:32-37.

Just as the Spring and Fall Feasts point the believer to their Savior and Messiah, so too should the believer anticipate – with great joy – fulfillment of the Blessed Hope all

believers in Jesus should have and only Jesus provides. If you are uncertain about your eternal destiny, revisit the Scriptures on Page 3. See you in the air – soon? Good day.

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