

# The Spring Holy Days

by Pastor Murray Palmatier

As we turn another page on our calendars, we find ourselves already in the month of March. What is of even greater significance is that March 11 brings us to a new year in God's calendar. With that, of course, is the beginning of another year of opportunity. Each year we have placed before us a series of Annual Festivals denoting the plan of God.

Why do we participate in this annual ritual of commemorating the Feasts of God as laid out for us in Leviticus 23? These are not just days for us to book off from work or school and gather together for a church service and a fellowship meal. These days play a vital part in our walk with God. This month we are preparing for the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread. Our observance of this "Spring Festival Season" begins on the evening of March 24 (New Testament Passover) and extends to April 1, with the conclusion of the seven Days of Unleavened Bread.

## **The Master Plan**

When God first made man, He said "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness" (Gen 1:26, NKJV used throughout). This was the start of the great master plan by our Creator to make a family. Man was the crown jewel of a most awe-inspiring creation. Yet, not long into his existence, something went awry for man. The account in Genesis 3 walks us through what has become known as the Fall of Man. At the end of this account, we see God blocking off the path to eternity from his crown jewel. (Gen 3: 22 – 24). What follows in the REST of the Bible is God's redemptive efforts on our behalf to save us from ourselves.

He placed Adam and Eve in the midst of Paradise and told them to partake of whatever they wanted, EXCEPT FOR THE FRUIT OF ONE TREE. Anything they wanted was theirs, except for the fruit on a single tree. Despite the clear pronouncement that if they ate of it they "would surely die" (Gen 3:17), eat of it they did! At this point, "The Plan" went into motion and our place in eternity rested upon the divine mercy in "The Plan".

## **From the Foundation**

The Apostle John reminds us in his account in Revelation that the Lamb (Jesus the Christ) was "slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev 13:8). Why would God who had everything and was in need of nothing take the time and effort not only to create this race of beings called Man but then have at the ready a plan of redemption in case we messed it up? John, after becoming a close personal friend of the Son of God during His time here on this earth, came to understand that "love" defines God and it is to this "love" that we owe this incredible opportunity. Remember that we were the crown jewel of His creation, the very reason He created everything else. The oft-quoted but often undervalued sentiment from Our Saviour tells us that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). We were that important to Him that He was willing to offer up His Son

in our stead, to redeem us.

Once The Plan was put into action, centuries of working with the nation of Israel would eventually lead to His arrival on earth, now a human being born to Joseph and Mary. His life, perfectly led, would end in pain, torture and suffering just outside Jerusalem at a place called Mount Calvary. It was here that, with a dying breath, He uttered three words that have changed history: “It is finished” (John 19:30). The Plan, arrived at “from the foundation of the world” was now assured. Our last remaining hope did not let us down because His love for us carried him through that pain, torture and suffering to where He could now offer us a way out of the sure penalty of death.

As the weeks of March tick by and bring us closer to another Passover evening filled with meaning, introspection, self-examination and humility, let us not just go through the motions of another year of Festival-keeping. Just like the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ is the starting point of the Redemptive Plan of God, so is our keeping of the New Testament Passover. We are about to embark on the annual tradition of keeping the Festivals of God. They represent our keys to eternity. Let us not take them lightly. Let’s embrace the feast days with our whole heart and our whole understanding!

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“Your boasting is not good. Don’t you know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old bread leavened with malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

(1 Corinthians 5:6–8 NIV11-GK)