

THE PASSOVER IN THE FIRST MONTH

CONSIDERABLE difficulty is experienced by many in harmonizing our solar calendar with that of the Jews, which is built upon an association of lunar and solar time. We tender assistance to such by quoting an extract from Smith's Bible Dictionary on the subject – followed by an extract from the Hebrew chronologist Lindo on the same subject.

Smith's Bible Dictionary says: –

"The characteristics of the year instituted at the Exodus can be clearly determined, though we cannot absolutely fix those of any certain year. There can be no doubt that it was essentially tropical, since certain observances connected with the produce of the land were fixed to particular days. It is equally clear that the months were lunar, each commencing with a new moon. It would appear, therefore, that there must have been some mode of adjustment. To decide what this was, it was necessary first to ascertain when the year commenced. On the 16th of Abib ripe ears of corn were to be offered as first-fruits of the harvest. (Lev. 2:14; 23:10,11.) The reaping of the barley commenced the harvest (2 Sam. 21:9), the wheat following. (Ruth 2:23.) It is therefore necessary to find when the barley becomes ripe in Palestine. According to the observation of travelers, the barley is ripe, in the warmest parts of the country, in the first days of April. The barley harvest, then, commences about half a month after the vernal equinox, so that the year would begin at about that tropical point, were it not divided into lunar months. We may conclude that the nearest new moon about or after the equinox, but not much before, was chosen as the commencement of the year. The method of intercalation can only have been that which obtained after the Captivity – the addition of a thirteenth month whenever the

twelfth ended too long before the equinox for the first-fruits of the harvest to be offered in the middle of the month following, and the similar offerings at the times appointed."

Extracts from *Lindo*:

"The Jewish year is luni-solar, for although the months are lunar, our calculations being founded on the lunar cycle, every 19th year we come to the same date in the solar year. The cycle contains 235 lunations, which we divide into twelve years of 12 months, and seven (termed Embolismic) of 13 months.

"The celebrated mathematician Meton of Athens, who flourished B.C. 432, which was in the reign of Zedekiah, A.M. 3328, made the same division of time, but by making every third year embolismic, the 18th and 19th were both of 13 months; by our arrangement the solar and lunar years are better equalized.

	Days	Hrs.	Min.	Sec.
19 years, according to Rab Ada	6939	16	33	3 $\frac{1}{3}$
235 lunar months	6939	16	33	3 $\frac{1}{3}$

"The year is of three kinds, perfect, common and imperfect. The perfect has 355 days, and is when the months of Hesvan and Kislev have each 30 days. The common, 354 days, when Hesvan has 29 and Kislev 30. The imperfect, 353 days, when both have only 29. The embolismic year is formed by the introduction of an intercalary month, immediately after Adar, which is called Ve-adar, or Second Adar. The year then consists of 385, 384, or 383 days, according to the rule above. The reason of the introduction at that period is that the Passover may be kept in its proper season, which is the full moon of the vernal equinox, or after the sun has entered Aries; it is indifferent at what period of it the full moon happens, but it must be kept while the sun is in that sign. That a

time was fixed for its observance is shown in Numbers 9:2, 'Let the children of Israel also keep the Passover at its appointed season.'

"That our months have always been lunar is shown by I Kings 6:38, 'And the eleventh year in the month Bul, which is the eighth month,' etc. By a reference to the Hebrew text it will be seen that the two words translated month are different, the first being derived from the word 'moon,' the latter from 'innovation.' Our months are the following: –

Tisri	30	days	Nisan	30	days
Hesvan	29 or 30	"	Yiar	29	"
Kislev	29 or 30	"	Sivan	30	"
Tebet	29	"	Tamuz	29	"
Sebat	30	"	Ab	30	"
Adar	29	"	Elul	29	"

"In the embolismic years, Adar has 30, and the intercalary month Ve-adar 29.

"As a lunation from one conjunction to another, **[R4127 : page 36]** termed a synodical month, has 29:12:44:3 $\frac{1}{3}$, being 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ days and about $\frac{3}{4}$ hour, it could not be better arranged than by making one month 29 and the following 30 days. When a month has 30 days, the last day of the month and the following day are both kept as New Moon, on the principle that a holiday cannot be kept part of a day. The 30th day being half in the preceding month and half in the new moon, the whole day is made a holiday, and the following as a matter of course, from its being the first whole day of the new moon. That this rule was followed in ancient times, is to be seen in I Sam. 20:5,27.

"It will have been seen that by this arrangement there is yet a deficiency every month of 44 min., 3½ sec., making nearly 9 hours in years of 12 months. To make up this deficiency one day is added to Hesvan every second or third year, by which that month then consists of 30 days. When Hesvan has 30 days, Kislev invariably has the same. Without Hesvan having 30 days, Kislev is sometimes made 30, which is done to prevent Passover happening on Monday, Wednesday or Friday, for as that festival regulates all the other holidays, it is arranged that none may fall on days on which they could not be properly observed. On the same day of the week as the

- 1st day of Passover are the fasts of Tamuz and Ab
- 2nd " " is the first day of Sebuot and Hosana Raba
- 3rd " " " " New Year and Tabernacle
- 4th " " " Rejoicing of the Law
- 5th " " " Kippur, the day of Atonement

"Consequently, were the first day on Monday, Purim would be on Saturday and Kippur on Friday, days on which neither could be observed. If it were on Wednesday, Kippur would be on Sunday, on which it could not be kept; the reason is that as Kippur has the same strict ordinances as Sabbath, it cannot precede or follow the Sabbath. If it were on Friday, Hosana Raba would be on Saturday, a day on which the ceremonies of it could not be observed. By the above regulation, it will be seen that Rosh Ashana can never fall on Sunday, Wednesday or Friday.

"This holiday is to be observed on the day of the conjunction, with the following exceptions: –

"1. If the conjunction takes place on Sunday, Wednesday or Friday, the holiday is to be kept on the following day, as in 5604.

"2. If the conjunction should happen after noon, the following day is to be observed, and if that should happen to be Sunday, Wednesday or Friday, the next is to be kept, as in 5601.

"3. If the conjunction takes place in an ordinary year on Tuesday, on or after 9h., 11m., 20S. A.M., it is not to be observed thereon, and as it may not be kept on Wednesday, it will be observed on Thursday, as in 5616. An objection may be made to this, as New Year should be observed on the day of conjunction, but were it to be so kept, the preceding month of Elul would only be of 27 or 28 days, and a month can never be less than 29.

"4. The conjunction being on Monday, on or after 3:30:52 P.M., in a year immediately following an embolismic, the holiday is to be kept on Tuesday, as in 5617. This occurs but seldom.

"Our embolismic years are Nos. 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17, 19 of each cycle.

"Although the Gregorian calculations have been made with great nicety they are still imperfect, and other alterations must take place in future ages. As a proof the Council of Nice ordered that Easter should not be kept on the same day as the first day of Passover, in order that there might be no appearance of Judaism in it; '*Ne videantur Judaizare,*' to prevent which they ordered its observance on the Sunday after the full moon, Passover being always kept on the day of the full moon; and yet in 1825 both were kept on the same day."

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From the foregoing it will be seen that, with every endeavor to reach exactly the date specified in their Law for the Passover, the Jews have difficulty, and often there is of necessity a choice between two days equally appropriate. However, they follow the guidance of their leaders in this matter and have a uniformity of

celebration, instead of each one trying to fix the date and celebrating according to his personal knowledge, convenience or preference. And this measure of subserviency to leaders was endorsed by our Lord, who said, "The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; whatsoever therefore they bid you observe, that observe and do." (Matt. 23:3.) The Apostle indicated [R4128 : page 36] the same course to the Gospel Church. (Heb. 13:17.) Two essential features of the celebration of the Passover were: (1) uniformity, and (2) that it begin as exactly as possible at the full of the moon – which symbolized the fullness of favor to Israel.

THE MEMORIAL SUPPER, 1908

Following the custom of the early Church, we celebrate the "Last Supper," not weekly, nor monthly, nor quarterly, as do our fellow-Christians, but *annually*. Nor do we celebrate it in the forenoon, but as a supper. To our understanding we thus better preserve the letter and spirit of our Master's request – "Do *this* in remembrance of me."

There still persists amongst Christians in general a hallowed respect for our Lord's death-day, celebrated as "Good Friday," but the precious Memorial Supper of the preceding evening they overlook. The reason for this is evident. Catholicism, which long held almost universal sway, introduced the "Sacrifice of the Mass" as a *substitute* for the Memorial Supper; and when the Reformers rejected the Mass as a *sacrifice for sins* and resumed a more proper celebration they styled it "the Holy Communion." They failed, however, to note that the original Supper was given to celebrate the *antitypical* fulfilment of the eating of the Passover Lamb – and that its force and beauty would be dimmed by observing it oftener than on its anniversary.

The writer and many others would incline to celebrate the Memorial Supper annually on the Thursday night most closely

corresponding to the original celebration, for several reasons. (1) That would bring the celebration into its proper relationship to Sunday, which is the remembrancer of our Lord's resurrection. (2) At that season Easter Sunday is quite generally celebrated as a special memorial of our Lord's resurrection. (3) The celebration of the Memorial Supper on the evening of what is by many styled "Holy Thursday" [R4128 : page 37] would of itself be a powerful lesson to many of our dear Christian friends who now think us "odd," or "followers of a Jewish custom," because, without study, which they will not give, they cannot understand our position. (4) Instead of copying anything "Babylonish," we would be calling attention to something long lost to Babylon. The finding of this sometimes means an investigation and appreciation of other truths lost or buried under human traditions.

But we pass by all these advantages, fearing that some could not appreciate them, and that therefore a *schism* might ensue. We prefer to remember the Apostle's words that there be no *schism*; that we seek to "preserve the unity of the Body in the bonds of peace." Hence we *do not announce* as the Memorial date the Thursday night nearest to the first full moon following the spring equinox. We again announce, as heretofore, the Memorial date as the evening of (preceding) Nisan 14 – the day before the commencement of the Jewish Passover Feast-week; viz., April 14, 1908, after 6 P.M. The Jewish Passover begins Thursday, April 16 (Nisan 15); but in Jewish reckoning it begins after sundown of April 15. Consequently Wednesday, April 15, is Nisan 14, beginning at sundown of Tuesday, April 14.

**"CHRIST OUR PASSOVER IS SACRIFICED FOR US,
THEREFORE LET US KEEP THE FEAST"**

– I COR. 5:7 –

What a meaning is in these words when seen in connection with the Memorial Supper as the remembrancer of the Jewish

Passover! How the light of the type illuminates the antitype. As the first-born of Israel were exposed to death, so "the Church of the First-born whose names are written in heaven" (Heb. 12:23) are now on trial for life or death everlasting. As then all the typical first-born were *safe* so long as they remained in the house and ate of the lamb whose blood was sprinkled upon the door-posts and lintel, so we who abide in the household of faith under the better "blood of sprinkling" and who eat of our Passover Lamb, Jesus, are safe from death – sure of life everlasting under God's providence.

We do not now recognize the typical lamb, but instead Jesus, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." On him we feed; not eating his flesh literally, but by faith partaking of the merit of his sacrifice and appropriating it to ourselves. All through this night of the Gospel Age do we thus feast on our Lamb – until the morning of the Millennium, when we shall be delivered. The annual Memorial Supper is not our feast, but an illustration or archetype of it – a remembrancer – most beautiful, most solemn, helpful. Let us keep the feast of faith and also the Memorial Supper. "As oft as ye do this [annually] ye do show forth the Lord's death – till he come again." – I Cor. 11:26.

In accord with our usual custom let us, then, on Tuesday night, April 14th, at 7.30 P.M., assemble ourselves and memorialize the great Redeemer's death and our release from condemnation to destruction. Yea, more, as we break the loaf of unleavened bread, let us remember the later suggestion of the Apostle that all the consecrated followers of Jesus are so counted in with him by the Father that we are "all one loaf" (I Cor. 10:17) and all have participation not only in our Lord's sacrifice or breaking on our behalf, but are to be broken with him as "members of his Body," the Church of the First-born. And as we partake of "the cup" of "the fruit of the vine" let us recognize it as not only representing our Lord's blood, his life sacrificed for us, but also as

the cup in which we join – our communion or fellowship in the sufferings of Christ, as the Apostle explains. (I Cor. 10:16.) And let us remember further the Apostle's words that "we fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ *for his Body's sake* [service], the Church." Thus "we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" – our moments and hours and talents and strength and convenience. – Col. 1:24; I John 3:16.

We recommend that *unleavened* bread be used. Jewish Passover bread (crackers) may be obtained in many cities, but otherwise "Uneeda" biscuit or soda biscuit would serve every requirement. As for the cup, "the fruit of the vine," we advise that grape-juice or raisin-juice be used, if agreeable to all, but if any require regular wine we advise that such be accommodated also.

We advise that the celebration be in classes or congregations as they usually meet for worship every Sunday: that friends do not desert the little gatherings on this occasion in order to celebrate with larger groups – unless *all* can thus unite, which is improbable. Do not forget the Lord's words, "Where two or three of you are met in my name there am I in your midst." And if there be sick or solitary brethren or sisters who cannot possibly meet with even one other, let them celebrate alone with the Lord. All such who have no means of preparing the Memorial emblems, if they apply to us by April 1, will be supplied freely.

For those who think of no better method, we advise the reading of selections on the subject from DAWN-STUDIES, Vol. VI., with prayer and praise. As for the *ministers* or servants for the occasion: they should be those ordained or set apart by the congregation by *vote*, "by the stretching forth of the hand" – the Elders. If the class is small and no Elder has been chosen, a servant for the occasion should be first chosen by consent of the majority of the consecrated believers participating. It is requested that some one be appointed to communicate to us on a post-card a brief

report of each celebration, giving the number of participants. We urge that *all* of the *consecrated* shall thus renew before the Lord their vow of loyalty and devotion to him and his brethren and his cause. There is a blessing in so doing which each one *needs*. Such participator will be strengthened and blessed, as the Lord and the Apostle indicate. Address all of these cards (even from foreign lands) to the Society at Allegheny, Pa., U.S.A.

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