

GROW IN GRACE

NEWSLETTER

Volume 39, No.13, March 26, 2013 / Southside Baptist Church & Christian School / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / **"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."** (2 Peter 3:18)

Celebrating the Crucified, Risen, Ascended, Reigning, soon Returning JESUS CHRIST the LORD... at His TABLE!

Just like most or all of you, I grew up celebrating Easter. We had Easter egg hunts, Easter bonnets, (well, the girls did!), and Easter Sunday. On Easter Sunday, Pastors took their texts, read Scripture about the resurrection of Christ, laid down their Bibles; and then preached about the 'Easter Event' and the 'First Easter' **as if** Easter had some Biblical connection to Jesus Christ. **I trusted them. I believed them. And, like the masses, I never once 'checked out' what I was taught by the Word of God!**

In the gracious providence of God, during college days I began to be struck with the reality that the Bible really is the Word of God. I did not know the term, **'Sola Scriptura'**— but I now know that is what I began to embrace—

"That Scripture is the only infallible voice in the church, and is to be interpreted, in its own light, and with the gracious help of the Holy Ghost, who is promised to every Christian (1 John 2:20-27), by each individual for himself; with the assistance, though not by the authority, of his fellow Christians." (A.A. Hodge)

I am warned NOT to add or subtract to God's Word: Deut.12:32; Prov.30:5-6; Rev.22:18-19. Therefore, I must be on a lifelong pilgrimage of studying the Word of God and of seeking to heed the Word of God! (Matt. 4:4; 2 Tim. 3:13-17)

From the Word of God I discovered that when it comes to commemorating and celebrating the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ— New Testament Christians simply obeyed Jesus and celebrated the New Testament Passover or LORD'S SUPPER! (Luke 22:19; Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 11:23-26) Thus, if we are going to take our cue from the New Testament, we will do as the New Testament Christians did!

When we read the New Testament, it is clear that the New Testament Christians did not commemorate Christ by Lent, Fat Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Fourteen Stations of the Cross, **Service**

of Darkness or Service of Shadows, Holy Saturday, Easter egg hunts, Easter Sunrise services, Passion Plays and/or Easter Sunday! [In fact, when one studies secular history, it is also true that for centuries prior to the coming of Jesus to earth— each spring the Babylonians and then the Romans celebrated the feast of Easter.]

The above religious customs and traditions have fundamentally come to us through Roman Catholicism. It is historical fact that they borrowed these customs from other religions and then *Christianized them*. As time has gone by, in varying degrees Protestants and even otherwise Bible Believing folk now fully embrace Easter, even as they do Christmas. When Biblical truth is set forth, attitudes of many run anywhere from anger to ‘don’t bother me with the facts— my mind is already made up!’

Think about it: Whenever the world wants to get their point across or promote their product— they spend mega-bucks. **They put on a Big Show and DAZZLE the physical senses.** More often than not, Christian Religion follows in that train as they seek to build impressive earthly kingdoms. **Thus, at Christendom’s grand calendar moments** of Christmas and Easter, churches are on dazzling display— they will do anything from dropping thousands of Easter eggs from the sky via a helicopter to having massive dramatic productions with actors pretending to be Jesus.

NEVERTHELESS, in great contrast, Jesus calls His Church to profound CELEBRATION of the most significant of all events in history with His own words:

"This do In Remembrance of Me!"

The LORD'S SUPPER is amazingly simple in its elements and is equally within the reach of the poor and the rich, the educated and the uneducated, the famous and the forgotten, etc. **THIS WEEK— LET US ‘MAKE MUCH OF’ THE LAMB OF GOD! WITHOUT any artificial enticements or inducements!** The pure Word of God and the blessed Holy Spirit are ready to carry us to the most ultimate heights of wonder and awe as we come to **the LORD'S TABLE— this Sunday, March 31** during the 10:45am worship service.

In preparation for the LORD’S SUPPER let us all meditate deeply:

Once (Hebrews 9:26) What Christ meant to do on the cross, He accomplished. He died with no part of His work left undone. He did not die that sin’s penalty and life dominating power might be vanquished by what He did PLUS some effort of our own! He died to vanquish sin Himself— once and forever: **One death; One sacrifice; One atonement; One cross; One price and purchase; One cross and crown; One death and deliverance; One and only once!** *The Savior said victoriously, “It is finished!”*

“He” - Who was He? He was very God of very God. He was commissioned by the Father to vanquish sin, (John 6:4). He was the Messiah, pledged by God’s covenant to deliver His people, (John 1:41). He was chosen, (1 Pet. 1:20). God didn’t send a mighty

angel. God didn't send a mighty army. God didn't send a mighty man. **God sent His Son— Himself.**

“Appeared Once” - He appeared as a babe in Bethlehem; The Infinite linked with the Infant. He who laid out the heavens, now lay upon a woman's breast. He invaded time and history. He came as the God-Man. He was unique. No one was like Him in the past. No one was like Him in the present. No one would be like Him in the future. *He appeared once.* He is **“Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father Prince of Peace”** (Isa. 9:6). He is King of kings. He chose not to stay on His throne. He came to earth for one brief period of time.

“To Do Away with Sin” - Sin is a reality for fallen man (Rom. 3:23). Sin cannot be tolerated by a just and holy God, as sin is contrary to His perfect nature. JESUS CAME and sinned NOT. JESUS CAME and paid sin's penalty— JESUS did away with sin!

Separation and reconciliation— Sin, producing enmity between God and man, requires atonement for the restoration of man's relationship with God (Rom. 5:10). JESUS MADE THAT ATONEMENT.

Condemnation and satisfaction (Rom. 5:18; 6:23; 8:1) — Sin's satisfaction [propitiation!] is what we celebrate as we gather at His Table. As we partake of the elements, representing JESUS' body and blood given in atonement for our sin, let us receive with assurance the benefits of His grace. As believers we have been redeemed and restored in our never-ending relationship with the Prince of Peace.

“Once for All . . . the Sacrifice” - In the Old Testament, the sacrifices were offered to satisfy God's justice, who was present in judgment and mercy. A blood sacrifice was demanded. In the Old Testament this had to be repeated time and again. **Jesus' perfect sacrifice accomplished “ONCE FOR ALL” all God demanded as the payment for our sin.** No longer would other sacrifices be required. In holy Communion, we remember all Christ has accomplished for us in His sacrificial death. (Edited from Jim Henry, *In Remembrance of Me.*)

THE LORD'S SUPPER is a call to live in the full light of heaven's reality— Jesus came! Jesus is here! Jesus is coming back!

And until HE COMES BACK WE MUST BE FOCUSED ON HIS BUSINESS! And as we do, we will be INVINCIBLE UNTIL HE CALLS US HOME!

BEAUTIFUL REALITY: “Blessed/happy/fortunate, to be envied are the people who know the joyful sound, who understand and appreciate the spiritual blessings symbolized by the feasts; they walk, O Lord, in the light and favor of your countenance.” (Ps. 89:15, Amp. Bible) (Lev 23 /Isa. 58:13-14/Luke 24:25-27, 44-45)

The SEVEN Sacred Feasts of the LORD, ALL REVEALED AT THE LORD'S TABLE, call us to a mighty revival of DELIGHTING IN GOD and a mighty revival of DELIGHTING in so GREAT SALVATION! Here is a LIGHTHOUSE to help keep us from spiritual shipwreck. Here is a ROAD-MAP so that throughout the year every Christian is

reminded of WHO we are in Christ, WHOSE we are in Christ and that we are on a specific journey with a grand mission... and we are headed home! YES—“Blessed/happy/fortunate, to be envied are the people who know the joyful sound, who understand and appreciate the spiritual blessings symbolized by the feasts; they walk, O Lord, in the light and favor of your countenance.”

I. Leviticus 23:4-5 - PASSOVER For the Old Testament Israelites, Passover was a remembrance of the night when the death angel passed over their homes sparing the first born. **For us, the Passover marks the beginning of salvation. The Passover lamb beautifully pictured Christ-** John 1:29... “Behold the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world.” I Cor. 5:7—“Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.”

God’s message in the Old Testament and the New Testament is the same: Not when I see your good works or your golden rule living; **NOT WHEN I SEE YOUR RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE— **but “When I see the blood**, I will pass over you!”**

NEVER FORGET: The Israelite deserved death as much as the Egyptian; and WE deserve death and Hell as much as anyone! Do you see that? Only when you do, will you flee to Christ for His blood to pay your sin debt! Have you ever come to Jesus with all of your sin; and cried out in similar fashion as the tax-collector: **“O God, be merciful to me a sinner!?”**

II. Leviticus 23:6-8 - UNLEAVENED BREAD In Scripture, leaven usually refers to sin. This feast pictured that those who were delivered from death, (by the shedding of and the applying of INNOCENT blood), have also turned their backs on their sin and their sin is forgiven! Therefore, let us receive this reminder from the Word of God: **God has a claim on the regenerated life! (I Cor. 5:6-8; 2 Cor. 6:17-18; I Thess. 5:22)**

MOREOVER: When Israel went out of Egypt by the power of God, Pharaoh and his armies pursued; but God stepped in to overcome the impossible! **When a person becomes a Christian, Satan and his armies pursue. They call you back.** They will try to force you back to Egypt! Christian friend, in our own strength we cannot conquer sin or self or Satan!

IN OUR OWN STRENGTH, we cannot keep God’s holy commandments. But Christ in us can! And so it is by Him, our High Priest, that we conquer (Ex. 13:14 & 14:14). Therefore, in obedient faith, let us put away all leaven of malice and wickedness (I Cor. 5:6-7). **In obedient faith**, let us live a life of feeding on Christ, the BREAD OF LIFE, who has no leaven. **In trusting faith** let us live a life of total dependence. **The LORD’S TABLE reminds us of all this and more!**

III. Leviticus 23:9-14— The Feast of FIRST FRUITS The Israelites could not harvest any of their early grain crop until the first bundle of grain was cut and brought to the priest. The priest would wave it before the Lord to be accepted of God. **For us, the resurrected Jesus Christ is the first fruits of them that slept.** (I Cor. 15:20-23)

Jesus arose from the dead. He was accepted by God. And because He, the first fruits, was accepted— so we the rest of the harvest are accepted in Him — James 1:18— “...of His own will begat He us with the Word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures...” Moreover, Rom. 8:23 tells us that we have the first fruits of the Holy Spirit! It is by the Holy Spirit that we have even now the resurrection life of Christ IN US and the blessed hope of future resurrection!

Now, the Feast of First Fruits was always held the third day from Passover: Christ was crucified on the day of Passover. He arose from the dead three days later on the Day of First Fruits. **When we experience a saving encounter with Jesus Christ, it is a spiritual participation in the first three feasts:**

(1) Passover— we are delivered BY THE BLOOD SACRIFICE OF A SUBSTITUTE, A SIN BEARER... OUR SAVIOR. Christ became our Passover Lamb and WE were and ARE Delivered from wrath/slavery/guilt. **But that is not all:** WE ALSO EXPERIENCE,
(2) “Unleavened bread”— we are separated. We put away sin and feed on Christ.
(3) First fruits— we are consecrated. We are accepted *in the Beloved* because of His resurrection and we are set apart for Him. We are not only saved from the world, the flesh and the devil, but we are consecrated— **Saved to a new resurrected life in Christ. But that’s not all!**

IV. THE FEAST OF PENTECOST This feast is sometimes called the Feast of Weeks. It was seven weeks or 50 days after the presentation of the bundle of First Fruits. This was originally a sort of harvest festival of thanksgiving after the people had gathered the harvest. The ancient rabbis, right or wrong, later concluded that God gave the law to Moses on this day. So this festival came to be regarded as the season of the giving of the law.

But more significant and certain is this: 1. Jesus died on Passover. 2. Jesus was raised on First Fruits. 3. And the Holy Spirit came exactly on the day of Pentecost! Are you beginning to see the relevance of God’s sacred calendar of redemption? And the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost for express purposes: **To indwell and fill and baptize believers. John 14:16-17— He shall be in you. (Acts 1:5; 2:4) **Why?****

1. To empower the believers for the evangelizing of the world (Acts 1:8).
2. To form the body of Christ (Jew and Gentile— I Cor. 12:13).
3. To enable and empower every Christian to keep God’s holy law (Ez. 36:26-27; Rom. 8:1-4).
4. To teach us all that Jesus said; to glorify Jesus; to unveil the future (John 14-16);
5. To manifest in and through every redeemed sinner miraculous fruit (Gal. 5:21-23);
6. To release through every Christian a glorious array of ministering gifts to build up the body of Christ. (1 Cor. 12) **Oh, glorious full salvation!**

NOTICE THAT ALL OF THESE EVENTS HAPPEN AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE:

1. Passover— Deliverance from judgment and Satan. **2. Unleavened Bread**— Separation from sin.
3. First Fruits— Consecration to Christ. **4. Pentecost**— Indwelling power for a holy/bold/witnessing life.

We are living in the Pentecostal age. EVERY TRUE CHRISTIAN IS, FROM A BIBLICAL SENSE, A PENTECOSTAL CHRISTIAN! RIGHT NOW! We are living in an interval of time before the next great event of God's calendar. My, what a solid Rock foundation the Christian has:

1. Christ our Passover, died for us. **2. Christ**, our unleavened bread. **3. Christ** raised.
4. Christ indwelling and empowering. Our past is forgiven AND our present is empowered.

But even that's not all! Now, in the fall of the Jewish year came the: Feast of Trumpets; The Day of Atonement **AND** the Feast of Tabernacles!

V. Leviticus 23:24— THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS In this present hour, the Christian lives with soberness and with hope. **Soberness:** Sound the trumpet! The judgment and wrath of God is coming. Soberness: Rev. 18:2-5. **Hope:** Rom. 8:18-39; Rev. 19-22. The sufferings of this present hour are not worthy to be compared to the GLORY that is coming!

VI. Leviticus 23:27— THE DAY OF ATONEMENT In the Old Testament it was a sacred day of cleansing from sin.

Today, in Christ, because of Calvary, we are already cleansed from: The penalty of sin and the ruling power of sin.

But one day, when Christ comes, we shall also be delivered from even the Presence of sin and Possibility of sin (I John 3:1-3). No wonder PAUL CRIES OUT—

"... God forbid that I should boast about anything or anybody except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, which means that the world is a dead thing to me and I am a dead man to the world. (Gal. 6:14, Phillips)

VII. Leviticus 23:43— THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES Here is consummation, completion, rest and fellowship with God. Here is ruling/rejoicing with Christ forever. Here is sitting at His feet and beholding His face (Rev. 22:1-5). Therefore: Gal. 6:14; Phil. 1:6; Phil. 3:13-14

Yes, if we will allow them, in New Testament fullness, the Sacred Feasts of the LORD call us to a mighty revival of DELIGHTING IN GOD and a mighty revival of DELIGHTING in so GREAT SALVATION! Here is a mighty LIGHTHOUSE to help keep us from spiritual shipwreck.

Here is a yearly, ROAD-MAP so that every week and throughout the year every Christian is reminded of WHO we are in Christ, WHOSE we are in Christ and that we are on a specific journey with a grand mission... and we are headed home! YES—

"Blessed/happy/fortunate, to be envied are the people who know the joyful sound, who understand and appreciate the spiritual blessings symbolized by the feasts; they walk, O Lord, in the light and favor of your countenance."

A GRAND BOTTOM LINE: All these things being true and unveiled in a New Testament understanding of the FEASTS of the LORD— **WHY DOESN'T THE NEW TESTAMENT SET FORTH AND CALL FOR the New Testament OBSERVANCE of these seven feasts?**

ANSWER: The New Testament DOES just that! The entire message of FULL SALVATION is encompassed at the LORD'S TABLE— we remember... till He comes! New Testament FULL SALVATION is to be set forth at the LORD'S TABLE!

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ME TO EAT AND DRINK THE LORD'S SUPPER? **It means that** I accept with a believing heart the entire suffering and death of Christ for me. **It means that** by believing I am forgiven all my sins and now have eternal life. This is not magic. **Eating the bread and drinking the cup does not wash away my sins.** Only Christ can remove my sins, and that happens when by His grace I put my faith in Him.

WHAT BENEFITS THEN DO I RECEIVE BY COMING TO THE LORD'S SUPPER? **My sins are exposed** for what they really are before a Holy God. **My heart is inflamed** with love for Christ. **I am reminded** of all that He suffered for me. My faith in Christ is strengthened. I not only hear with my ears what He has done for me, but I can also see, smell, taste, and touch the tokens of His suffering and death on my behalf. My hope that one day I will live with Christ is made more certain. Although His resurrection body is in heaven at the right hand of the Father and I am still here on earth, the Lord's Supper reinforces His promise that **He is coming back AND that** He will one day raise my mortal body and take me home to heaven to be with Him.

WHAT IF I KNOW THAT I'M NOT PERFECT? I may come when **I know myself to be a sinner and am displeased with myself because of my sin, yet come trusting in Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of my sin.** I may come when **I know myself to be weak and in need of Christ to strengthen my faith and when I desire Him to enable me to live a better life.**

WHAT SHOULD I THINK AS THE ELEMENTS ARE DISTRIBUTED? As I take the bread, I remember to thank God that **Christ took up a human body; that He was tempted just as I am; that He was willing to suffer for me; that He lived a hard life in a poor family and that He was willing to be misunderstood.**

As I take the cup, I remember to thank God that Jesus poured out His blood for me; that He saves me from the guilt of my sin; that He sets me free from the power of sin; that I now have the righteousness of Christ and that I will live and reign with Christ forever.

SCRIPTURES FOR MEDITATION: **The Penitential Psalms:** Psalm 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143 // Isaiah 53, 55, 59 // Gospel of John 13-17 // Romans 3, 6, 8, 12

Grace to all in Christ! James Bell www.southsidegallatin.org

SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES for March!

1. Ladies Bible Study— 'LORD, HEAL MY HURTS!'— Tuesdays @ 10:00AM! Call— 615-452-5951

2. WEDNESDAYS: PRAYER SERVICE at 7:00PM! / YOUTH: Wednesdays, 6-8pm @ Southside Church building!

3. Thursdays @ 6:30pm: OUTREACH 4. **Saturdays @ 8am: Men's Fellowship/Bible Study**

Sunday Schedule for March 31, 2013— RESURRECTION SUNDAY

1. 9:30am- CHURCHWIDE BRUNCH!

2. 10:45am- Morning Worship/Children's Church /

LORD'S SUPPER SERVICE

3. NO Noon Fellowship Meal or afternoon service