

September 12th, 2021 "Revelation- The Unveiling #4"

Partners in Prayer

Dear Partners in Prayer Team,

*"The seven stars are the angels [or messengers] of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches." **Revelation 1:20 (NKJV)***

Dear John of Patmos [the Revelator],

I've been downhearted through these trying times. I was so encouraged when you came to Ephesus to teach us, and your years of ministry are certainly lacking as you've been imprisoned on Patmos. I constantly remember your messages on "loving one another" but through these times, I often don't think we as believers are actually living up to that message. We are complaining, we are hurting each other, we are arguing through these very difficult moments in time. I wish things would change about our ministry, and my brothers and sisters in some of the churches around us are also saying much of the same things. Why is it that going to church is falling out of vogue? Why is it hard for people to find the perfect church today? If you were Jesus, and we know you are not, what words you would give to all us believers who are fearing persecution for our faith, and who are frustrated with our current church and circumstances? One thing I remember is that when you taught us Gentiles who've come to Christ, that you always as born Jewish anticipated the coming of Jesus through your seven yearly feasts. Can you elaborate a little more about that? Why are we having these "changing times" and what should we do?



A Fearful- Discontented Believer

Dear Fearful and Discontented,

I do understand all that you are experiencing. Sometimes we as believers want to cry: "Just give me Jesus!" But if believing in Jesus means being ridiculed and mocked, means a loss of freedom, means pain and sorrow, and might even

mean costing you your life, why do it? If following Christ's plan and surrendering to Him could possibly mean losing everything, why make that choice? What are the benefits of making that decision? If churches and pastors are in such a state, what is the thing God is trying to teach us? I just want to turn your attention back to Jesus and remind you that He tells us how powerful He is (Revelation 1:8-12), and that we should not fear following Him nor even death (vs. 17-18), and that He still holds all His churches in His nail-scarred hands (vs. 19-20). So let me remind you that Christ is always among us. I want to share with you some current statistics I just recently saw.

The Church is people, so you'll always have change!

A pastor friend always answers my question, "How is your church brother?" He sadly lowers his head and replies: "Listen brother, the church is made up of sinful people, so the church goes as the people go." I understand that it may sound depressing, but there is Biblical truth to that statement. You need to know that everything churches are experiencing today in America are the same in all the churches. There is no perfect church.

In the study sponsored by a group of ministries led by Chosen People Ministries and conducted in early 2020, Lifeway Research asked pastors if they considered certain current events to be included in Jesus' warnings of His coming in Matthew 24.

- ✓ At least 3 in 4 pastors agree Jesus was referring to current events including the rise of false prophets and false teachings (83%), the love of many believers growing cold (81%), traditional morals becoming less accepted (79%), wars and national conflicts (78%), earthquakes and other natural disasters (76%), and people abandoning their Christian faith (75%).
- ✓ Clear majorities also see famines (70%) and anti-Semitism toward Jewish people worldwide (63%) as signs of Jesus' return.
- ✓ Around 1 in 10 pastors (11%) say they don't consider any of this part of the birth pains to which Jesus was referring.
- ✓ "For too long many pastors have shied away from teaching on birth pains and events leading up to the second coming," said best-selling author Joel Rosenberg, "but the current pandemic demonstrates the need for solid, non-sensational preaching done in a biblical manner."
- ✓ Almost 9 in 10 pastors see at least some current events matching those Jesus said would occur shortly before He returns to earth, according to a new survey focused on Christian eschatology, or the study of end times.

A study from Nashville-based Lifeway Research of pastors at evangelical and

historically black churches found 97% say they believe Jesus Christ will literally and personally return to earth again.

“While Christians prepare to celebrate Jesus’ resurrection, many pastors believe they see signs his return may be close,” said Scott McConnell, executive director Lifeway Research. “These sentiments were expressed in January before the prospect of a global pandemic became known.”

When you want to yell: “Just give me Jesus!”

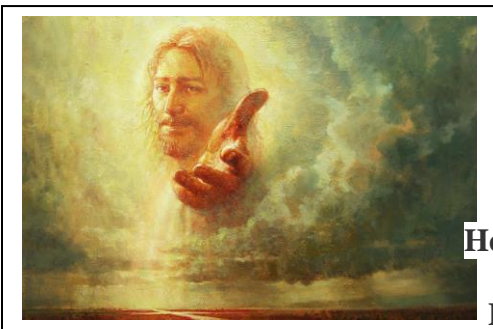
Remember John 1:14 in the Gospel letter I wrote to send around to all the churches: “The Word became flesh and took up residence among us. We observed His glory, the glory as the One and Only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14 HCSB). May I encourage you that there is no perfect church out there. We all are God’s family. We need to live and treat each other as a family, and not a business. I understand the times when we are lacking in love for our church or even our ministries. But know that all the churches are experiencing the same problems. In my letter called “Revelation” I was overcome by the awe and holiness of who Jesus is! Let’s get our eyes on Jesus through these changing times.

Several years ago, I read from a book authored by a believing sister in Christ who had an amazing way of sharing truth. I want to share with you some of the fascinating truths that she shares about our Savior and Lord. (Note, her thoughts are taken from a message by the late Dr. S. M. Lockeridge and referenced source is below):

**“Jesus Makes God Visible
He is enduringly strong.
He is entirely sincere.
He is eternally steadfast.
He is immortally gracious.
He is imperially powerful.
He is impartially merciful.**

He is the greatest phenomenon that has ever crossed the horizons of the globe.

**He is God’s Son.
He is the sinner’s Savior.
He is the captive’s Ransom.
He is the Breath of Life.
He is the centerpiece of civilization
He stands in the solitude of Himself.
He is august and He is unique.
He is unparalleled and He is unprecedented.
He is undisputed and He is undefiled.
He is unsurpassed and He is unshakable.**



He is the lofty idea in philosophy.
He is the highest personality in psychology.
He is the supreme subject in literature.
He is the unavoidable problem in higher criticism.
He is the fundamental doctrine of theology.
He is the Cornerstone, the Capstone, and the stumbling Stone of all religion.
He is the miracle of the ages!

(Ann Graham Lotz's book, *Just Give Me Jesus Just Give Me Jesus* – Word pg. 10).

That is just one aspect of this wonderful Jesus that we worship on this Lord's Day! Jesus is the One who makes our God visible! So get your eyes on Jesus and not on people or churches or circumstances.

Just keep an eye to the sky and not only the calendar!

We are exiting summer months and preparing for the fall. This is the time so many people look forward to their "Pumpkin Spice Lattes" and look forward to fall festivals and gladiatorial area games (Football in America). How many times have we heard people say, "I just love the fall and the changing seasons!" Yet we can't say the same is always true of changes occurring to churches today. With Emperor Worship by Domitian being pushed as a political agenda, Christians are not willing to gather in the plainest of places- homes, tombs, outdoors, wherever they could find a quiet place to gather. So many are leaving church and trying to be Christians from a distance. As you welcome the change of seasons, we need to see it as a lesson of Christ's return. So what do my Jewish people have that most Gentiles don't? I'm sure you are aware of how the last few Caesar's ruling the Roman Empire have tried even to control our seasons and times. Julius Caesar himself, even created a calendar to run the entire empire on. (Note the Julian calendar was used until about 500 BC until the "Gregorian" calendar was introduced by the Roman Church.) Did you know that the month of "July" comes from Caesar's own personal name? He wanted people to keep worshipping and being reminded of him as they looked daily at the calendar. Did you also know that the name for "August" comes from Caesar Augustus? The Latin word "august" carries the meaning of "awe-inspiring" or "awe-full" one. You can see that every time we tell time in the Roman Empire, it reminds us that Domitian wants to be in control and be worshiped. He is notorious for wanting to be called "august" every time we look at our calendars too! To us Christians, no person is worthy of the title "august." Only God could properly be called the "August One." To be august is to be awe-inspiring. In the ultimate sense only God is awesome and awe-filled! We become most aware of ourselves and our weakness during these times, and we know our times are temporal, and we need God's power and strength. So as we pass currently through these hot "summer" days and move into the fall, try to remind ourselves that "Jesus is coming."

We as Jewish believers in Messiah and having grown up in Israel had a

calendar of seven festivals which always reminded us of Messiah's coming. So every time we went through summer months and into the harvest months, we looked for the blowing of trumpets, the gathering of all men to be judged by God, and the coming of Messiah. Let me explain:

What are the seven Jewish Festivals?

You can find them easily by reading the Old Testament in Leviticus. As outlined in Leviticus 23, these feasts are grouped in three major seasons: in the early spring, the late spring, and the fall:

- ✓ The Feast of Passover (Lev 23:4-5)
- ✓ The Feast of Unleavened Bread (Lev 23:6-8)
- ✓ The Feast of the Sheaf of Firstfruits (Lev 23:9-14)
- ✓ The Feast of Weeks/Pentecost (Lev 23:15-22)
- ✓ The Feast of Trumpets (Lev 23:23-25)
- ✓ The Day of Atonement (Lev 23:26-32)
- ✓ The Feast of Booths or Tabernacles (Lev 23:33-44)

The first four feasts have already been fulfilled by Messiah the first time He came.

1. At Passover- Jesus did the shedding of blood and redemption of all men. Fulfilled! (By Jesus/Yeshua at His crucifixion on Nisan/ April 14 in the spring of 32 A.D.)

2. Then the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Fulfilled! (By Jesus/Yeshua at His burial in the tomb on Nisan/ April 15 in the spring of 32 A.D.) He was buried and we celebrated it at Easter time. Remember your celebration from Easter this year and all the people responding to our postcards that we sent as a church.

3. Then the Feast of Firstfruits. Jesus also fulfilled this! (By Jesus/Yeshua at His Resurrection three days later on Nisan/ April 17 in the spring of 32 A.D.)

4. And importantly, the Feast of Pentecost. Jesus used all us disciples in the Book of Acts 2. The moment the church was born and fulfilled! (By the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost 50 days later on Sivan/ May 7 in the summer of 32 A.D.)

Every time God's believing people look at the calendar, they see that through the year, God fulfilled these events in Jesus. Yet, three of these feasts are still future and are believed by many Jewish believers to be the future Second Coming of Christ. They are: the Feast of Trumpets; the Day of Atonement; and the Final Harvest. So here they are explained by my Jewish growing up traditions, and I hope that you will enter into this season with your eyes, not on man's made-up calendar, but on Jesus. Also, let me make you aware of them because the Jewish people all around the world are celebrating them

now!

1. Rosh Hashanah: Trumpeting the End of the Age. We just celebrated a week of Rosh Hashanah. Most of us don't notice it, but it just occurred September 6th. The High Holy Days of the Fall Festivals begin with the celebration of Rosh Hashanah, which is described in Scripture as Yom Teruah, "the day of blowing [of shofars]" (Leviticus 23:24). The penetrating sound of the shofar (ram's horn) harkens back to the day when Abraham, at God's bidding, offered Isaac in the Akedah ("binding") on the altar on Mount Moriah only to discover that God had provided the sacrifice, a ram caught by his horns in a thicket (Genesis 22:8, 13). The shofar blasts that are sounded on Rosh Hashanah to initiate the Ten Days of Awe which are designed to call God's people to introspection and to repentance and to gather before Him. Doesn't this remind you of brother Paul's teachings that we as a church are waiting for the trumpet call (1 Thess. 4:11-18)?

Rosh Hashanah is filled with prophetic insight, foretelling the future time when, as the end of the age approaches, God has ordained a great day of awakening. The divine shofar will be blown, (Rosh Hashanah), and this clarion call will be designed to summon Israel, the Church, and the world to repentance and restoration. Joel 2:1 spoke of this: "Blow the shofar in Zion...let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord is coming; surely it is near." The importance of this event cannot be overemphasized, for Scripture declares that it will be God Himself who will blow the shofar to signal the end of the age (Zechariah 9:14), just as tradition maintains that God Himself blew the shofar in the beginning of time in order to initiate the creation of the universe on Rosh Hashanah. The last shofar sound will issue forth this proclamation: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign forever and ever" (Revelation 11:15). Again, we call this the "Rapture" and we are still waiting for it. So, here is a telling question: "Did you at all this week think that Jesus may be blowing and calling us as a church to Himself?" Or did you just go about your week with your eyes on the man-made calendar?

2. Yom Kippur: A Final Day of Atonement is September 15th. Yom Kippur begins at sundown on Wednesday, Sept. 15, 2021 and concludes the evening of Thursday, Sept. 16, 2021. In biblical times, Yom Kippur was the culmination of the Ten Days of Awe (remember month 'August') that began on Rosh Hashanah. It was the one day on the divine calendar when God annually summoned His people to repentance and renewal. This was a day of fasting and soul-searching in which the people of Israel examined themselves "to see that they were in the faith," a practice that carried over into the nascent Messianic community of the first century (1 Corinthians 11:28). Again, what Israel did for centuries was designed by God to be prophetic of what would occur at the end of the age. It always occurs seven days after the trumpet is blown. (My idea is that this happens after the last seven years Daniel predicted

to come and Jesus describes in Matthew 24.)

Subsequent to the prophetic Rosh Hashanah blowing of the shofar in Zion to awaken all people, Yom Kippur speaks of another profound End-Time event when “all Israel will be saved,” when “the Deliverer will come out from Zion and will remove ungodliness from Jacob” (Romans 11:26). This will be a time of restoration during which Israel is destined to recognize the Messiah and to be reconciled to Him (Zechariah 12:10). It will be the ultimate fulfillment of Israel’s final Day of Atonement when God Himself will open a “fountain for sin to the house of David” (Zechariah 13:1), proclaim all of those who obey the sound of His shofar to be righteous (Isaiah 60:21), and inscribe their names in the Lamb’s Book of Life (Revelation 21:27). This is Christ’s touchdown and Second Coming.

3. Sukkot: The Messiah’s rule and rest and kingdom to come. Sukkot follows just days later, beginning at sundown on Monday, Sept. 20, 2021 and concluding at sundown on Monday, Sept. 27, 2021. The Festival of Sukkot is the final Torah festival on God’s calendar. It is likened to Messiah establishing His Kingdom. This festival celebrated the end of all the harvests, but it also required the Israelites to remember their journey from Egypt to Canaan by living for seven days in sukkot (booths or huts). Sukkot was described as “The Season of Our Joy” (Zeman Simchatenu) and was the greatest time of celebration on the calendar. In fact, the first-century celebration of Sukkot in Jerusalem was beyond spectacular. While recalling the transitory nature of human existence, this festival also featured time to search the heavens for signs of the Messiah’s coming. As we study Revelation, we will see the Kingdom described in chapters 20-21.

To sum it up!

The Seven Jewish Feasts are key waypoints on a roadmap in holy history. They tell the story of the main Covenant events between God and His Elect people as they occur here on the earth and in time. The story begins back with the people God called in Old Testament times. And it extends right through to the apocalyptic events I (John the Revelator) saw in vision and wrote about in the Book of Revelation. Indeed the very next feast, the Feast of Trumpets is coming up in some future new moon to express its New Covenant fulfillment in holy history. The Feast of Trumpets will almost certainly be the one that will usher us into the 70th week of Daniel and the final seven years of this present age. At the end of those seven years the final Day of Atonement will come into its ultimate fulfillment as well. This will be the very last day of this age.

The Jewish Feasts will take us beyond the Apocalypse. The seventh feast, the joyous Feast of Tabernacles, will come into its ultimate fulfillment as the true new age dawns. This will bring in the Millennium of Messiah, that glorious age to come. The deserts will bloom and streams of waters will break forth upon the dry ground. God will camp out with mankind for 1,000 years as

Emmanuel, "God with us". And as a shepherd feeds and tends his sheep He will draw His people to Himself.

So, Fearfully-Discontent Believer, get your eyes off the man-made calendar, and up to the sky! And pray: "Give me Jesus!" And pray asking for God's blessings on your church! Through these days of changing seasons, you should be asking God to change you. Think of changes you can involve yourself with through our church. Ways of outreach. Ways of inviting others to services. Don't focus on what may be going wrong, focus more on what the Lord is doing!

Will you pray with me?

"So precious Father, we ask you to send Your Son soon! Help us recover from our cold and lost first-love for Jesus and our brothers and sisters in the Lord. Holy Spirit, warm our hearts and keep us looking up in these days we live. Even so, we pray in Jesus' Name. 'Come soon!' Amen."

Quote: "If the church is a lamp in Christ's lampstand, a disconnected chandelier is about as useful as a flameless lampstand. It may be nice to look at, but it isn't accomplishing its purpose- to give light." ... Woodrow Kroll

Quote: "We fear Jesus because He is holy. Our fear is not the healthy fear that the Bible encourages us to have. Our fears today are fear born of dread. Christ is too great for us; He is too awesome. He makes difficult demands on us. He is the Mysterious stranger who threatens our security. In His presence we quake and tremble. Meeting him personally may be our greatest trauma. Allow Christ's holiness to touch your life and experience the trauma of His holiness to prepare you for His coming." ... R. C. Sproul

Quote: "Corrie ten Boom, the Dutch woman who saved Jews from the Gestapo, recalled a childhood incident when she told her father, 'I'm afraid that I will never be strong enough to die as a martyr.' He said, 'When you have to go on a journey, when do I give you the money for the fare- two weeks before?' 'No Daddy, on the day that I am leaving.' 'Precisely... and our wise Father in heaven knows when we're going to need things, too. When the time comes to die, you will find the strength you need- just in time.'" ... David Jeremiah in *Escape the Coming Night*.

