

1Tim 24-03-31a

Good morning, welcome to Grace and Truth Bible Church on this Resurrection Sunday morning. We have quite a bit to look at today in connection with the events of this preceding week culminating in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. There are some curious aspects of the celebration of those wonderful events this week.

We are sort of unusually bowing to tradition in the sense of celebrating it today and we'll see why that is. But there is fruitfulness and purpose in our remembrance of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ as Paul so beautifully describes it in 1 Corinthians chapter 15. And having seen that many times, we're going to look at some of the forward-looking passages of scripture.

We look back with great appreciation and a great blessing on it from our vantage point. But there were those things which anticipated it and we're going to see some of those this morning. Let's ask God's blessing on our fellowship and study.

We'll begin. Father, we come before you this morning recognizing your mighty act of grace and power in not only sending the Lord Jesus to take our place, to be our substitute, to enable us to be reconciled to you, to have our sins atoned for and our souls redeemed, to be entered into your family, to enjoy all of the wonderful blessings that are ours in this age in Christ, but the power of the resurrection that proves and declares the Lord Jesus to be your Son, both the Son of Man and the Son of God, the unique second person of the Trinity and also the unique member of the human race who represents us even as I speak at your right hand. It is a privilege for us to approach by your grace in his name and through his blood to represent ourselves, to make our requests, to express our thanksgiving and our intercessions for one another.

We pray this morning as we look at truths from your word that God the Holy Spirit will make them meaningful, show us their pertinence and application in our own lives so that in the time that remains to us in this life we can live in a way that pleases you and glorifies the Lord Jesus. We ask it in his name, Amen. This is a strange year on the Jewish calendar.

This is the month of 5784 according to Jewish reckoning, which you know, most reckoning is off. Our BCAD is slightly off despite best efforts. The Jews endeavored a number of years according to the creation of the world.

By their reckoning, traditional reckoning, 5784 years ago was creation. And if you subscribe to the 6,000 year model of history with the 7,000 being the Sabbath of human history then we would have some time left to wait. So with that in mind, I thought I would take a look at the strangeness of this year, this 5784 in terms of the Jewish calendar, year of our Lord, 2024, and the distance, unusually so, this year between Passover and what is traditionally known as Easter.

I have mixed feelings about calling it Easter, we'll revisit that, but I like to generally call it Resurrection Sunday. Easter derives from Ishtar and Ashtaroth and it's like many other things in our time of reckoning is based on pagan gods. But you can't get away from it, the days of the week, the months of the year and so on.

So I don't think it's a terrible travesty to call it Easter, but this is Resurrection Sunday. However, this is not Passover. And we know that the crucifixion and three days and three nights in the heart of the earth and the resurrection took place in the Jewish month Nisan, beginning at sundown on the 14th, the Passover lamb was slain between the evenings on 14 Nisan, the 14th ends at sundown.

The 14th itself is not a Sabbath, but beginning at sundown, 15 Nisan is always a high Sabbath. And there are different ways of trying to calculate the day of the week that the Lord was crucified. You have proponents for the tradition is Friday.

I personally hold with Thursday. There are those who can very persuasively defend Wednesday. We're going to see this morning something that may help us sort of lean toward one or another of those.

But here's the thing. Everything turns on application. What difference does it make that we come together and look at the Word of God, are reminded of who we are and why we're here, the encouragement of the Spirit, the encouragement of our bonds of fellowship, the identity that we have, our defining identity is in Jesus Christ.

And the things that pertain directly to Him, nothing more important than His death, burial, and resurrection. Paul says famously in our recent observation that this is the gospel. Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures and that He was buried and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures.

And when he says according to the scriptures, he says as anticipated in the Old Testament writings, as anticipated in Torah, in Ketuvim and Nevi'im, Ketuvim the writings, Nevi'im the prophets, Christ died, was buried, and rose according to Old Testament scriptural prophecy. And Paul is telling this to a Gentile church according to the Hebrew scriptures. So the Old Testament is not to be taken lightly by the church and so we endeavor to take a look at it, we're going to take a look at it this morning.

But why this weird year? Because this is not Passover, this day right now is not even Nisan. We haven't yet gotten to the month of Nisan on the Jewish calendar. So, currently today on March the 31st, we're in the month Adar, A-D-A-R, the month Adar.

This now, bear with me, I'm going to talk a little bit about calendar stuff, but we're going somewhere, we need this for background. As you know, this is a leap year, it's an election year, we had a February 29th a few weeks back, so it's a leap year for us because there is a quarter day in the solar arrangement between the earth and the sun,

the year is 365 and one quarter days long, every four years we have to recognize an additional day to keep things synchronized, because we're on a solar calendar. The Jews and the Muslims and many others are on a luni-solar calendar, and so instead of a leap year, it requires a leap month, and bear with me, we need to know this.

But there is a 19 year cycle in the lunar calendar that is observed by the Jews, and this goes all the way back to the earliest days, it goes back to Torah, the Torah commands that the Jews, the people of Israel track new moons and keep a lunar calendar, and this goes back to Exodus 12.2, the lunar month is 29 and a half days long, give or take, and so a lunar year of 12 months is 354 days, we've got 365, so you have an 11 day difference between the two, potentially. The months alternate between 29 and 30 days in length, you can't have a 29 and a half day month, changing the date at noon or whatever, so they alternate, 29 and 30 days. One consequence is that every year the observances that are tied to a month, the spring feasts and the fall feasts, would creep forward 11 days, and very quickly you would no longer have Passover celebrated in the spring, or Sukkot and the fall feasts celebrated in the fall, they would creep into a whole other season.

So in order for these feasts to keep their relative positions with regard to the seasons, they have to make an adjustment to the lunar calendar just like we do to the solar calendar, and there is an extraordinary provision that is made. In order for the calendar to stay straight, there's a more complicated system for the Jews and for those who observe a luni-solar calendar, it's a 19 year cycle, and since so they add a leap month at the end of the year, this would be like adding another December every so often to our calendar. So in a 19 year cycle, in the 3rd year, the 6th year, the 8th year, the 11th year, the 14th year, the 17th year, and the 19th year.

So this is 7 times in 19 years, there is a year that has an extra month. This is Adar, and the original Adar becomes Adar 2, so you have 2 end months, 2 months of Adar in a leap year. This is a leap year for us, it is also a leap year for Israel.

So, because of that, we are in the 2nd Adar month right now, and that has pushed Nissan forward. So in the Jewish calendar, we are currently on this March 31st, this is the 2nd Adar month this is the 21st of Adar 2, 21 Adar 2. So as you can imagine, we've got to get to another week before you come to Nissan, and then 2 more weeks before you get to 14th Nissan, which is the proper day to observe Passover. So oddly, this early Easter and late Passover has to do with the way those holidays are calculated.

You would think the church, being biblical, would have based Resurrection Sunday, Easter, on Passover, and we would keep it where it belongs. But, because we always want it to be a Sunday, and not necessarily the 17th of Nissan, the Lord was crucified between the evenings on 14 Nissan, He is in the grave 15 Nissan, 16 Nissan, and early in the morning on the 3rd day, which is 17th Nissan, He arose. And we prioritize it being a

Sunday morning, the first day of the week, and so the calculation of these celebrations is based on rules.

So the Easter is scheduled shortly after the first day of spring. What is the first day of spring? Well, it's at the vernal equinox, which is somewhere March 21st, it can be a day earlier or a day later. But roughly on March 21st, you have the equinox, this is the tilt of the earth and so on.

It's halfway there. You have the solstices in the summer and in the fall, halfway in the winter, and then the fall and spring equinoxes are halfway through. So how do they figure out when we're supposed to celebrate Easter? The earliest can be March the 22nd, and the latest is April the 25th.

The last time we had an Easter that landed on March 31st was in 2013, and the next time it will happen is in 2086. And again in 2097. But it is calculated on the first full moon after the vernal equinox.

That's how they figure it. So this is the first time in eight years that Easter has not been in April. We've tagged right at the end of March here.

And the Jews are having the opposite experience because their Passover schedule, their month is A, pushed forward by having a second Adar, and of those years when there is an extra month added, this is the sixth in the 19-year cycle. And if you wrote those down, you know that there will be another one in two years. So you have this displacement between Passover and Easter that is very unusual.

And we're not going to have Passover until April the 22nd. 21st and 22nd in that area. So the Jewish holidays, Monday, April the 22nd, is going to be the first day of Passover.

And that is going to be 14 Nisan. So then Tuesday will be 15, Wednesday will be 16, and Thursday will be the 17th. And so it doesn't fall on the right day of the week.

But it's a little bit odd to have such a distance because if you're Biblical, you respect God's calendar, the Jewish calendar, and it is determined by the new moons, not by a declaration of the church wanting to be sure it hits on a Sunday. And so we have about two and a half weeks between the two this year. And it's not Passover yet.

So I almost feel like we ought to have a second celebration of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. But it's an odd time that they are so far distant. They often coincide pretty closely.

But what does this mean to our study? This explains why it's not appropriate to be wishing the Jews Happy Passover yet. Wait over a half a month and then you can tell them Happy Passover. But more importantly is the Biblical calendar yields Biblical significance.

God pays attention to the feasts of Israel. God pays attention to the lunar calendar that He established for them. It's a lot easier to observe the moon than it is the sun.

In Jewish tradition, this is recognized, the sun and the moon. The sun is very constant. It is predictably changeable as you cross the seasons and the sunrise and sunset traverse a fixed portion of the horizon.

It's very slow. It's imperceptible from day to day that the sun is slowly moving northward as you approach spring and summer and it is moving southward as you head toward fall and winter. And the sun is always full with very rare exceptions.

The solar eclipses as we've got coming up here in about a week. But the sun represents constancy, predictability, solidity, that upon which you can rely. It gives energy and life.

You can't grow crops. Things don't get warm without the sun. The moon, on the other hand, represents variability.

Its path across the sky changes on an almost daily basis. Its position in the sky changes on a daily basis. And the phases of the moon change over the course of just a few days.

You go from a full moon to a gibbous moon to a three-quarter moon to the other phases, a half moon and on down to just a little slice in the sky and then a new moon. And its light is completely extinguished. And this happens 12 times a year unlike solar eclipses that happen completely infrequently depending on where you live, almost never.

So you have these signs in the sky. And when you think about the dream of Joseph that he communicates to his brothers and one of the reasons they began to hate him about the sun and the moon and the stars bowing down, why is it the sun and the moon? There is significance in that as we've seen in our Genesis study. But here's where we're going this morning.

Because normally Resurrection Sunday and certainly in the year that the Lord Jesus was crucified, this Sunday, Resurrection Sunday, was on the Jewish calendar the 17th Nisan. Passover on the 14th, 15th and 16th in the grave and early in the morning on the 17th there is the Resurrection. So we have some things to look at with regard to the 17th Nisan.

It is an amazing month and it is an amazing date. I'm going to give you seven things in the Bible that all took place on 17th Nisan. Six of them are Old Testament.

One of them is New Testament. I think you can guess the one that's from the New Testament. But, turn back to Genesis chapter 8 verse 4. It begins in the very first book of the Bible.

If you know your Genesis geography, you remember that this beginning at Genesis 6

with the sons of God and the daughters of men extending through chapter 7 which is the flood and then chapter 8 which is Noah's deliverance through the flood. God remembered Noah, every living thing, all the animals that were with him in the ark. God made a wind to pass over the earth and the waters subsided.

And the fountains of the deep, the windows of heaven were stopped. The rain from heaven was restrained. The waters receded continually from the earth.

At the end of the 150 days the waters decreased. Then the ark rested in the 7th month, the 17th day of the month on the mountains of Ararat. 7th month, 17th day of the month.

In the old calendar, the civil calendar, Nisan was the 7th month. So, the ark comes to rest. This is an interesting day in the circumstance of the flood.

It's been raining and Noah has been in the ark for 14 months. And the ark comes to rest. So, its status of floating on the surface of the flood waters changes on this day.

Noah and the animals are still inside the ark. He hasn't exited the ark. But, on the day that it comes to rest, we have a note made.

It touches ground. Firmness is reestablished. What you might think of as random floating.

It is on the mountain of Ararat. So, now we know where we are. We're back attached to terra firma instead of floating.

And it is a mark. You could think of the judgment and the release or removal from judgment as sort of shades of gray. Certainly, when it begins to rain and the waters begin to rise, people didn't drown as soon as the first drops hit.

But, the waters rise and over a fairly brief period of time, they become unsustainably deep. And everyone and everything that draws the breath of life, the flood waters extinguish that life. And you would think, well, especially if it were a localized flood, it would only take a few weeks at most for the purpose to be accomplished.

The larger the flood is, the longer it is going to take both to raise the flood waters above the highest mountains and to have them recede. Unless God supernaturally suspends the laws of physics, this much water takes time to dissipate. God shuts off the rain.

God closes off the fountains of the deep. All of these were associated with judgment. But, the suspension of the judgment is gradual.

And there is a mark, there is a time when the ark touches the ground of Mount Ararat and it rested. Seventh month, 17th day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat. The waters continually decrease until the 10th month.

So, once it touches ground, they sit there three more months. Three more months. So, it came to pass in the 10th month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.

So, this gives you an idea, based on the draft of the ark, of how far down, before you can see the tops of mountains, before you can see the ground that the ark is resting on, it takes three months for that much water to recede. And, at the end of 40 days, so now, after 10 months, in the 10th month, after three months of sitting on Ararat, another month and 10 days, 40 days, Noah opens the window of the ark and sends out the raven. And you remember how this proceeds, with the raven and the dove and so on.

And, he waits seven days, and then he waits another seven days, and in verse 11, the dove came to him in the evening and has a freshly plucked olive leaf in her mouth. Noah knew that the waters had receded from the earth. He waited another seven days, sent out another dove, which did not return.

Actually, sent out the dove. So, it came to pass in the 601st year, in the first month, first day of the month, that the waters were dried up from the earth. Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and indeed, the surface of the ground was dry.

Second month, 27th day of the month, the earth was dried. God spoke to Noah saying, go out of the ark. So, why do we need the day that the ark touches Ararat given to us? This is the first of several easily recognizable calendar dates.

Back up in verse 4. This is the beginning of deliverance. It is not the completion of deliverance. And when you look at the number seven of events that took place in the month Nisan on the 17th day, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, this is significant and essential, but it does not complete salvation.

It does not complete deliverance. Other things have to take place. Time has to pass.

So, it is one of several necessary stages and steps. And it is not enough that because Jesus lives, we're done. Jesus lives, we will live, great.

Let's eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die. And a few days after that, we will be raised. It is not the idea.

It is essential. Noah certainly can't even begin to think about leaving the ark until it grounds on earth. But more time has to pass.

More of the chaotic waters of judgment have to be dealt with. They have to slowly and gradually disappear. We think about our new life in Christ.

When we believe in Him and trust God for our salvation through Him, we're not immediately sanctified. We're not immediately energized with power over sin and the full

function of our spiritual gift and discernment and motivation and hope and courage and all of these other things. It is essential, but it is the beginning of our experience of salvation that is ongoing and is designed to be better and better over time.

So, if you had to sum up one attribute, one character trait, one attitude for Noah, when he first feels the jar as the ark lodges itself on the mountains of Ararat, what character trait does he need to experience the fullness of his salvation? Patience. Patience. Three more months pass for the waters to recede, according to verse 5, until he can even see the tops of the mountain.

Not only am I on solid ground, but I see other patches of solid ground. He has to wait another 40 days before he can open the window. This tells me that there were observation ports that he can see through so that he can see the tops of the mountains, but the window is really the hatch.

He can actually get out and walk on the outside decks. But this requires patience, and then he sends out the raven, which kept going to and fro until the waters had dried up from the earth. He also sent out the dove to see if they had receded.

The dove found no resting place and returned, and so on. Hebrews 10, 36, you can write it in the margin of this chapter in Genesis. You have need of patience, that after you have accomplished the will of God, you might receive the promise.

Patience. After love, joy, and peace, the fruit of the Spirit is long-suffering. Patience, bearing with.

Patience with one another, patience with circumstances, patience with hardship, patience with circumstance. You have need of patience. That's the significance of coming to rest on the mountains of Ararat.

But this is also a new beginning. It is a fresh start. Old things are passed away.

All things are become new. If any man be in Christ, it's a new creation. Old things are passed away.

All things are become new. But why doesn't the ark come to rest? Noah opens the door of the ark and steps out onto dry ground the way the Israelites crossed the Red Sea. Forty years later, they crossed the Jordan.

And why is there not already pre-planted fruit trees? There's civilization. Angels have built a little habitation for him to dwell in. Like the Garden of Eden, there are an abundance of fruits and things that he can eat.

This is going to be post-flood silted ground. It is going to take time before Noah can plant his vineyard. So 2 Corinthians 5.17, it's a new start.

It's a new creation. But that new creation also has to develop. It has to fruit and improve over time.

Old things are passed away. All things are become new. But much of that newness is potential.

It begins on the 17th of Nisan, and it moves forward for months and weeks and days before Noah can leave the ark, the protection and the security and the provision of that physical environment to experience the new evil-free environment outside. It takes time for it to recover from judgment. If you remember the beginning of the millennial kingdom, after Armageddon, the kingdom is going to start, but it will take seven months just to bury the dead that are left over from the horrors of the last half of Daniel's 70th week.

Seven months. This is reconstruction. This is rebuilding.

Why doesn't God just speak a word and it's all golden and perfect? Six months and 28 days after, they will still be getting the last of the corpses into the ground. They do the work. They make the improvements to launch the millennial kingdom.

So as we think about this day, this resurrection day, it is essential. It is hugely important. You can't do anything else without it, but it is a beginning.

It is a day of new beginning. This is the first day in the life of the resurrected Christ. He is now in a new and improved body that can come and go at will, that can enter locked rooms, that can appear and disappear outside the laws of physics that confine and define this world.

He has access to other dimensions and other worlds, the throne room of God. He is going to ascend to his father in that same body. He sits today in that body at the father's right hand.

So it is a day of newness of life. It is a day of opportunity, but these days come with a period of development and preparation and exploitation of the victory. Jesus isn't exploiting his victory over sin and death on the cross on the 15th or the 16th.

The visible manifestation of that victory is the 17th. The visible manifestation of God's preservation of Noah begins on 17th Nisan. So as we think about our salvation, as we think about our coming resurrection, and we think about the nature of our already not yet deliverance, in John 11, Jesus says, the one who lives and believes in me will never die.

I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And the one who lives and believes in me will never die.

It is the beginning of new life. It is the beginning of our salvation, and it is manifest. It is evident that not only do we have a new position and a new opportunity from God, but it requires something of us.

First and foremost, patience. Patience. Let's pause here and take our break.

When we come back, we are going to see five other events in the Old Testament that all take place on this selfsame 17th Nisan.