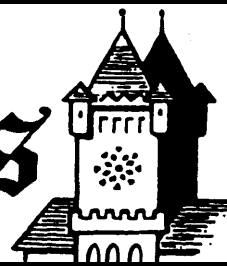


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COMPREHENSIVE PSALMODY

by Ray Joseph

The Judgment of God... how can man deal with that? The answer is... he can't! Judgment is too hot for man to handle!

The Bible says that God has committed all Judgment into the hands of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who administers Judgment on nations and kings, on men who run their own way, who order their own lives, who seek after their own pleasures and barely glance at Him over their shoulders. His Judgments fall on individuals and personalities at the "micro" level, and communities and nations and kings at the "macro" level because of their Christ-rejecting, God-ignoring philosophies.

How can man deal with these? Answer: He can't!

It is the "all authority" Christ of Matthew 28:18 and the Book of Revelation Who administers the Judgment of war, that scourge that falls on man as Jesus keeps on opening the 7th seal of Revelation chapter 8.

Looking back only 60 years, World War I followed several decades of God's long-suffering as men increasingly built their society around the pagan philosophies of Rousseau and Hegel and Nietzsche, populating the universities and manning the opinion making media. And as unrepentant men gnawed their tongues in pain [Revelation 16:10,11] King Jesus sent World War II, China became "Red" [following the Russian revolution] and then the Korean "police action" followed by Vietnam... and Cambodia and the "boat people", etc. All of this backgrounded by the angry cloud of the Gulag, supplemented by "yellow rain" and Khomeini and Solidarity in Poland and now an impending worldwide economic collapse, accompanied by mounting terrorism to threaten the heads of church and state.

Christ's Judgments fall on the world of His rejecters, with many "innocents" getting hurt or killed. Now, how can the Church of Christ be realistic in praising their Lord for these things?

The answer is: If the content of their praise is written by men (no matter how "inspired"), they clearly will not be realistic in praising Christ for His Judgments in the real world of sin, judgment, and redemption.

Because men don't want to be accountable to their Creator, they choose not to believe in Him. That way they can be free to pursue the myth that they are independent and able to build their own "life and world view." And no one likes Judgment! Whether Christian or non-Christian, both abhor Judgment. And, if anyone had the temerity to pick up a pen and write a poem about it, and set that poem to music [a "man-written" hymn], the whole subject would be too hot to handle!

Who would dare, for example, to write about God's Judgment on the Jews leading up to World War II? And then His "follow-up" Judgments on His instruments, the Nazis? George Cornell couldn't. In his nationally syndicated column he petulantly complained about the "Holocaust"... "Why did man permit it? Why did GOD?" But he had absolutely no concept of God's Judgment on the Nazis and the whole military-industrial

complex which they commanded — Christ using "Assyria the rod of mine anger", and then destroying (judging) it. Who can deal with that in a "man-written hymn"? No one can!

Looking back a hundred and twenty years to the War Between the States, to the Judgment of God on this country [perhaps the North more than the South?], among the many songs to be written was the "hymn" penned by Julia Ward Howe, "The Battle Hymn of the Republic", which speaks of Christ as "trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored", but among man-written hymns there will be very few that speak so explicitly of Christ's Judgments. Why? Because, Judgment is "too hot to handle." Men would much rather pen poems of preference that overlook the uncomfortably (and inexpressibly) obvious... that Jesus Christ judges men and nations for their sins, and that He desires that His Church should praise Him for that!

It takes GOD to write about His Judgments! It takes the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures adequately to handle, to speak, to sing of the Judgments of God's Son, Who has been given all authority and power. It is all written down in the Psalms and Revelation. But, sadly, few Christians are aware of it, in either book.

The Psalms? We've replaced them with "man-written hymns" that are more to our own subjective liking, and that leave out Judgment. We don't like Judgment, and so we don't want to sing about it. We really couldn't, anyway, dependent as we are on our own subjectively preferred (man-written) compositions. Judgment is just too difficult to express. (An "imprecatory" man-written hymn? You must be joking!) We much prefer our own human compositions that extol our Lord in a manner to which we would like to become accustomed, poems penned by other men like ourselves that make us "feel good". They excel in what we think is a superior "comfort factor".

Judgment reveals a side of our Lord that we don't want to think about: His Judgments on men for their sins. We would much prefer our comfortable image of Christ as the "Meek and Mild One," the non-threatening "Warm Body," Who spends His time wringing His hands over all of the misfortunes that tend to irk us day by day. But a Jesus Who Judges the nations? Never! Too unpalatable and unpopular. Rather, what we really think that we need is a Jesus that can repackaged attractively by a good, sharp, front-office church "P.R." department. That will look good, sound "modern", and sell well. A Christ of Judgment? Very few would "buy" that!

And so the Jesus of Revelation chapter 1, with His eyes like a frame of fire, and of chapter 5, where the Awesome One takes charge of the Book of History and begins to open the seals — we relegate these disturbing portions to a *future* age! That way it won't bother or modify our preferred and chosen image of our Saviour, an image that magnifies the savory truth of His love (how we love "Love", . . . pages and pages in our hymnal), and nearly totally ignores the unsavory truth of His Judgments (not even *ONE* page in that precious "hymnal"?) And so our Lord never hears the voices of His Church on earth praising Him for that awesome portion of His work in the King-

dom: His Judgments on men and nations for their sins.

But our Lord keeps right on Judging the nations anyway, even if His Church on earth prefers to ignore it. They have largely given up His Authorized Book of Praise (the Psalms) and consequently His Judgments are "too hot to handle" by the hands of mere men.

Even though, unfortunately, His Church prefers to ignore them by avoiding the Psalms, yet His Judgments are abundantly evident all around us, and starkly visible for those who have eyes and hearts and ears to see and hear. And for those humble and intrepid souls who dare to walk to the brink of the Word of God and peer at the Judgments of Christ, their Lord, to consider the crushing weight of them, yes — to praise King Jesus for them in His Psalms, these come back awestruck with the WORD emblazoned on their minds and hearts, the only realistic foundation for an enduring society of obedience and liberty.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE CALENDAR

by James B. Jordan

No. 23: The Calendar Before Sinai, Part II

We saw in the previous study that there is every reason to believe that before Sinai worship occasions were connected with the sabbath day and with times set by the sun and the moon as God-ordained clocks. These were creation ordinances, and while Christians live in the New Covenant and thus in the New Creation, yet we also live in the first creation and the rhythms and patterns of that creation continue to be relevant to our lives. These patterns were in full force during the period between creation and the writing of the Law at Mt. Sinai, and we may readily believe that they were observed during that period.

Cain and Abel

An interesting indication of this occurs in Genesis 4:3, "So it came about at the cutting off of days that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground." Since the Garden of Eden was still standing during the period before the Flood, we may believe on the strength of the language here and later that Cain and Abel (v.4) brought their sacrifices to the door of the Garden. There, perhaps, God's holy fire came from between the cherubim to consume the sacrifice of Abel, but not that of Cain. As a result of his murder of Abel, Cain was driven from the land of Eden (v.1 6). The bringing of the sacrifice to the house of God corresponds to the requirements later recorded at Sinai.

Similarly, Cain and Abel knew when to bring their sacrifices. They did so at (literally) the cutting off (*qets*) of days. This was almost certainly at the end of the harvest. It was Cain, apparently, who was in a position to determine this change of times: He was the farmer, as well as the firstborn son of the house. Abel followed his lead and also brought a sacrifice.

The term *qets* is interesting. It always indicates the cut-off point of some set period of time. Not infrequently, as we shall see, it indicates a sabbath. It is related phonetically to the words *qatsir* (harvest) and *qatsar* (to reap, cut down). [Hebrew lexicons ascribe *qets* and *qatsir* to two different roots, but this is speculative and depends on an evolutionary view of the development of language. The ear readily connects the two, and the connection in meaning is also clear.] The harvest entails cutting down the fruit of the ground, and is the cutting off point for the agricultural year. Later, at Sinai, the Feasts of Weeks and of Tabernacles were closely tied to the harvest (Lev.23:16,39). The latter came in the seventh (sabbath) month, at the end of all harvests.

Extrapolating backwards from information given at Sinai, we may readily imagine that Cain and Abel brought their sacrifices in the seventh month. According to Exodus 23:16; 34:22; and Leviticus 25:8-10, the year ended in the seventh month. Thus, the solar year began in the eighth month, although the cycle of lunar months began in the spring with the first month

(Ex.12:2).¹ While we are not told explicitly that Cain and Abel reckoned the cutting off of days in this fashion, we have no reason not to think so, and every reason to think they did.

The Flood 'Year

Interesting indication of sabbath observance before Sinai comes from a consideration of the Flood year. Comparing the Flood account to the account of creation in Genesis 1, we find clues in the text which indicate on what day of the week various Flood events happened. God's announcement of judgment and the arrival of His judgment are sabbath events (Saturday). Similarly, the sending of the dove who found no rest implies the sabbath. The emergence of land from the waters is a Tuesday event (Gen.1 :9-13), and the cessation of rain and the re-emergence of the heavenly lights is a Wednesday event (Gen. 1:14-18).

What follows is a calendrical commentary on the Flood year. We shall assume that each month began according to Noah's determination that the new crescent (new moon) was visible, and thus that we have an irrational sequence of 29 and 30 day months. We shall juggle these months around to see if we can make them fit a theological pattern of days corresponding to Genesis 1, and then see if we are left with a roughly 50-50 spread of 29 and 30 day months. In this way, the validity of our assumptions can be tested.

Using the rest of Scripture as our guide, we start off with the assumption that God's announcement of the Flood came on a sabbath, the day of judgment. This was year 1, month 2, day 10 (hereafter printed 1/2/1 0), according to Gen. 7:1-4. The judgment commenced one week later (Gen.7:1 0-1 1), on 1/2/17. After 40 days the rain stopped (Gen.7:1 2,1 7), and by implication the heavenly clocks became visible again. If we assume a 30-day second month, we come to 1 3/37, a Wednesday (corresponding to the fourth creation day, when the lights were made).

Skipping to the appearance of dry land out of the sea (on 1/10/1 according to Gen.8:5) let us provisionally assume this to be a Tuesday, corresponding to the third day of creation week. This means that if the tenth month is 29 days, the raven sent out 40 days after 1/10/1 was sent out on a Saturday (sabbath) (Gen.8:6-1 2). The dove sent out at weekly intervals thereafter was also sent out on a sabbath, but could find no rest.

Following from this, if the eleventh month is 29 days and the twelfth is 30 days or vice versa, then the drying of the surface of the earth and uncovering of the Ark on 2/1/1 (Gen.8:13) was on a Sunday, the first day of a new creation. Similarly, if the first month of year two was 30 days, then the emergence from the Ark on 2/2/27 (Gen.8:14) was also a Sunday.

This leaves the resting of the Ark on 1/7/1 7 (Gen.8:4). We assume that this is the same as the 150th day after the Flood began (Gen.8:3), since if it were later, we should have months of more than 30 days, and if it were earlier, the waters would not have been abating. Since there are 150 days, the months in between are each 30 day months. Since the Ark is said to rest, we might expect this to be a Saturday, but it is a Tuesday, which squares with the emergence (invisibly to be sure) of land out of water from Genesis 1.

We provisionally assumed above that 1/1 0/1 was also a Tuesday (Gen.8:5), and this is the case if we assume 29 day months for the seventh, eighth, and ninth months.

Now, let us cross-check the scheme. We found reason to believe that months 2,3,4,5,6,1 1/1 2 were 30 days, and 7,8,9, 10,1 1/1 2 were 29 days, with the first month of year two a 30 day month. This gives us the anticipated roughly 50-50 spread, and adds strength to our hypothesis.

The word *qets* is used twice in connection with the Flood. In 6:13, God says to Noah, "The cutting off of all flesh has come

1. The Bible speaks of the day as beginning at evening, as in Genesis 1, "there was evening and morning, one day." Similarly, the year begins around the autumnal equinox, as the sun sets below the equinox. Parallels between solar days and the solar year were developed in the early essays in this series.

before **Me.**" The expression "come before" indicates the formal bringing of a matter before a king or judge for judgment or evaluation. This is judgment day, and the case of humanity is before the Divine Judge. He righteously determines to bring about a cutting off point in history, a harvest of the wicked. Scripture later regularly speaks of judgment day as a day of harvest.

In 8:6, at the cutting off of 40 days Noah sent out a raven, on the 41st day. This was most likely, as we have seen, a sabbath, and thus appropriately marks a new beginning after the old world has been cut off. Remember, in Genesis 1 & 2 man's first full day was the seventh day; man started off on a sabbath, resting in God. This is the first sabbath mentioned in the new post-Flood creation, and thus commences man's restored life.

STUDIES IN BAPTISM

by Ray R. Sutton

No. 17: Baptism and Circumcision III

And in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions (Colossians 2:1 1-13).

In essays I and II we studied continuities between circumcision and baptism. Three were examined. In the present study our investigation concerns a fourth continuity, *the relationship of sacrament to family*.

Here is the issue: In the Old Testament, God commanded Abraham to circumcise the male infants. When God converted the head of the house, He claimed the entire family (Gen. 17). Family units, not just individuals, came into the covenant. So, the rest of the family came under the sign of the covenant along with him.

In the New Covenant, however, some would say that changes in this relationship of family to sacrament occur. The family is not treated as a unit. Only individuals are converted. Children of believers are no different from children of unbelievers. Thus, baptism is not for infants.

If these views are correct, the relationship of family to sacrament has radically changed — a change which goes far beyond simply applying the New Covenant sacrament to females as well as males. Several considerations indicate that this kind of alteration has not taken place.

First, the original covenant with man included his family. Adam could not carry out God's mandate alone. Help was provided. Together man and woman would produce seed to bring more help. As a unit, the original family could have subdued the earth. It is important to see, therefore, that children had a place *from birth* in God's initial program. Their purpose: To help the parents and become part of a multiplied effort.

When man fell, he lost his children to the serpent. A breakdown resulted. The natural birthing process of bringing children into the kingdom of God was destroyed. Children were born into sin for the first time. The womb of humanity was even closed. The women of the Old Covenant are characterized as *barren*. But if the children are to become part of the kingdom of God something must overcome the natural process of birth into death.

This provision occurs when God kills an animal to provide covering for Adam and Eve. Blood sacrifice clothes their nakedness. The new way of life is *bloody sacrifice*. What about the children? They would be covered with the same animal skins when born. At that time, sacrifice would come to them. Nothing indicates that children were excluded from the covenant. As a

matter of fact, Eve's description of the birth of Seth (Gen. 4:25) expresses *inclusion* in the kingdom of God. Therefore, *the fall altered the family structure, but redemption restored it*.

The story of redemption is that the family is regained. Man and woman bear seed. Reproduction signals fruitfulness. Fruitfulness means that God has reinstituted the original mandate. Sin is not greater than grace. The original mandate remains, and Satan does not thwart God's program. The family is pulled back into covenant with God, and He once again accomplishes His program through the family.

One would expect to see changes in the structures of God's covenant after the fall. The application of skins to the whole family creates a continuity with pre-fall man. The family continues to be the vehicle of dominion. Thus, the emphasis of Genesis is that the seed preserves the family. In each stage of patriarchy, God raises a deliverer — Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph — to save the family.

Second, the preservation of the family structure is heightened with the circumcision of Abraham and his household. Circumcision was practiced in the ancient world. It was never applied to infants though. For the unbeliever, it was a rite of passage into puberty. Salvation, however, is not to be postponed until puberty. That would break down the original purpose of the family.

God comes to Abraham and makes a promise. The promise directly concerns his descendants. Circumcision became the sign of the promise. As long as the sacrament was applied to the children, until the coming of Jesus (Note that the rejection of the Messiah nullified circumcision, Rom. 2:25-29), the Abrahamic promise was fulfilled.

We could continue to look at how God heightens the relationship of that sign-sacrament to the family in the Old Testament. For our purposes, however, we can stop with Abraham and move to the New Covenant.

Third, one sees in the New Testament that Peter applies this promissory language to New Covenant people (Acts 2:39). Paul speaks of the relationship between seed and seeds (Gal. 3:1 5-29). And concludes his argument by saying the New Covenant people are the "seed of Abraham." Households were baptized where the New Testament refers to a family (Acts 16). In some sense, women are saved (compare this language to Eve's assessment of her first child, Gen. 4:1) in the bearing of children (1 Tim. 2:15). Thus, the New Testament only heightens the relationship between sacrament and family. It fulfills all that has been promised for thousands of years.

In conclusion, to exclude children from the sacrament alters the means for accomplishing the original mandate. The structure of the covenant is reduced to the individual. The entire process of redemption, however, indicates that such a notion is false.

AN ECONOMIC COMMENTARY ON THE BIBLE

by Gary North

No. 18: Famished Souls and Empty Purses

The LORD will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish: but he casteth away the substance [cravings] of the wicked (Prov. 10:3).

The tenth chapter of Proverbs begins with a series of contrasts: wise sons vs. foolish sons (v. 1), ill-gotten wealth vs. righteousness (v. 2), righteous people vs. wicked people (v. 3), lazy people vs. industrious people (v. 4), etc. They are not contrasts between capacities for work, or capital, or basic intelligence. The contrasts are *ethics*.

This verse is difficult to translate. Older versions (King James, American Standard) refer to the soul of the righteous; later versions (Revised Standard, New American Standard, New English Bible) refer to hunger: "The LORD does not let the righteous go hungry" (NEB). Is the focus of the passage pri-

marily spiritual or primarily physical?

Psalm 106 offers parallel ideas and parallel problems of translation. Speaking of the Israelites in the wilderness, the psalmist says, "They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel: But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert And he gave them their request, but sent leanness into their sod" (13-1 5). The contrast in the language of the King James is between physical or biological lusts (probably their demand for meat: Num. 11) and spiritual maturity. Problem: the New English Bible translates verse 15 as follows: "He gave them what they asked, but sent a wasting sickness among them" [marginal reading: "in their throats"].

The Israelites had complained in the wilderness about their lack of meat. The King James reads as though their request was spiritual: "... but now our soul is dried away," but the New English Bible translates it as: "Now our throats are parched" (Num. 11 :6). in other words, the Hebrew language so closely links "soul" and physical attributes (e.g., throat) that the translators are not agreed concerning the proper focus of concern of the writers.

What presents a difficulty in translation also presents a lesson in biblical theology. The language of Old Testament Hebrews so intertwined the spiritual and the physical that we are not always certain which aspect they had in mind, or even if they clearly distinguished the two. But we do know this much: there was a close link in their mind between spiritual conditions and external conditions.

The Israelites in the wilderness were given the physical meat which they had requested, yet they remained spiritually blind. We know that they received meat in the form of the birds; we also know that they continued to grumble against God, and that only Joshua and Caleb were allowed to enter the promised land. The contrast is clearly between righteousness and unrighteousness, between trusting in God and complaining to God. Yet the language of the original request, which was unquestionably demand for physical meat, can be translated so as to make the request appear to be a spiritual quest, "our soul is dried away" (King James).

When we understand how closely they linked body and soul, we begin to understand the contrasts in Proverbs. Righteousness is linked with prosperity, while unrighteousness is linked with poverty. *A man's spiritual condition was understood as having predictable (statistically significant) consequences for his external economic situation.* Few biblical doctrines are more resented by humanists and socialists than this one. It means that men are responsible before God and men for their overall success or failure. It also means that one civilization's

wealth need not be the result of another civilization's poverty.

God will not starve the man who is ethically subordinate to Him. The hunger that godly men experience, both spiritual and physical, will be satisfied by God. Covenant-keepers can be confident in God. They can go about their daily tasks knowing that God will sustain them. This confidence encourages them to organize their lives according to His law, since they need not fear that temporary setbacks will bury them or destroy the long-term effects of their works.

In contrast, the unrighteous are told that God will thwart their desires and goals. Either they will fail, in time and on earth, or else the capital they accumulate will eventually be transferred to the righteous (Prov. 13:22). They may work hard, build a capital base, and attempt to extend their dominion across the face of the earth, but they and their heirs will not achieve their covenant-breaking goals.

It is not that God casts away their substance — their capital base — as implied by the translation of the King James. He transfers it, putting it to uses different from those planned by the original developers. What is cast away is their desires. They may well achieve their goals in terms of building up a capital base; what is promised is that their desires will not be achieved.

The Bible affirms the temporal efficacy of hard work, thrift, and the other disciplines that we associate with the phrase, "the Protestant ethic." But these virtues are not sufficient to produce the results hoped for by the wicked. In the language of the economist, the Protestant ethic is "necessary but not sufficient" for long-term economic growth, unless that ethic is sustained by the theology which created it. It is not an autonomous set of ethical principles that can be effectively applied, long term, by any and all cultures, *because covenant-breaking cultures cannot sustain this ethic indefinitely.*

This verse therefore gives confidence to the righteous and hopelessness for the wicked. By affirming hope for the righteous, God provides His people with the attitude of victory that is so necessary in any long-term program of dominion. By affirming despair for the unrighteous, God also strengthens His people. There is both a positive and a negative aspect to the dominion covenant: "we win; they lose." We are "programmed" for victory; God's enemies are "programmed" for defeat.

The righteous man receives a two-fold feeding: spiritual and physical. The Hebrews did not separate the two realms. The wicked man also is dealt with in a two-fold manner. Both his soul and his purse become lean (Hag. 1 :6). *Two-fold feeding and two-fold starving*; this is the underlying theory of economic development in the Proverbs.

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