



*Memorial
Days*



Memorial Days

“For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.”
2 Peter 1:12-15

Every May we celebrate Memorial Day. It is a great time of fellowship and remembering those who have gone on to their reward. It is traditionally a time for bar-b-que cookouts and the beginning of water sports season. Like many of our holidays, it often revolves around families and friends getting together to enjoy food, friendship and fun. Hopefully, the important element of remembering the contributions of previous generations

is not lost in the revelry.

As we think about memorials it might be good to look at some of the history of our own Memorial Day. I gleaned this information from Wikipedia:

The history of Memorial Day in the United States is so controversial that it constitutes an area of research. At Columbus [Georgia] State University there is a Center for Memorial Day Research. It, together with the University of Mississippi's Center for Civil War Research, are excellent starting points for investigating the topic.

The practice of decorating soldiers' graves with flowers is an ancient custom. Soldiers' graves were decorated in the U.S. before and during the American Civil War.

Some believe that an annual cemetery decoration practice began before the American

The fate of the wicked cannot be more different. “The wicked are not so, but they are like chaff which the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.” The source of evil is, of course, Satan. He controls any person that is in rebellion to God's Will. Many people actually seem to embrace a life of wickedness, but allegiance to Satan will result in a life that becomes increasingly dark and miserable. A sinful life will literally suck the spirit, youth and vitality out of a person. It's no coincidence that people will look at someone and say, “Boy he looks like he's lived a hard life.” The final result will be the loss of everything and then death. Satan shows no loyalty to his “tools”.

The psalmist wrote, “They are like chaff which the wind drives away”. Too often, the wicked and their activities loom very large in this world. Strength and power seem to rest with those that will not follow the Lord. Yet, how permanent are they? They are “like chaff” - They are like little pieces of trash that are blown about. What is strong or important in the world is not necessarily strong and important to the Lord. By its very nature, wickedness is rotten at the core. The title “Caesar” no longer brings fear. Nazi Germany and the USSR are subjects for history tests.

Verse 6 concludes with the final scene, “For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.” Notice how people, who have lived com-

pletely worldly lives, try to avoid any sign of aging. As death approaches, they become increasingly desperate to delay the inevitable. The thought of dying and being forgotten is frightening.

But “the LORD knows the way of the righteous”. God remembers His children! The service, the faithfulness, the love, the prayers, and the tears are all remembered. In Christ, a person's life has meaning, and it is not forgotten! But the wicked will perish, and it will be as if they never existed.

So which destiny will it be? Will it be eternal life or will it be oblivion?

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Reflections of the Psalms: Psalm 1

Psalm 1 describes the two destinies of mankind. One destiny is to follow the way of wickedness, and the other is to follow the way of God. Life often seems to be so complicated with day-to-day activities, decisions, and experiences. But life really boils down to two, and only two, possible paths - life or death.

In verse 1, the Psalm begins with the word "blessed", and it describes the person that follows the path of righteousness. "How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers!" For a person that strives to follow God's will, and lives a life that is God-centered, Psalm 1, in fact the entire Bible, is a message of hope.

Many people, even professing Christians, often question the practicality of the Bible when dealing with issues of modern-day life. Obviously, people tend to focus on the problems they are facing, but how many problems are never experienced because a person followed the teachings of the Bible? The alcohol induced wreck that never happened, the drug addiction that never occurred, and the marriage that was never destroyed due to an affair because people focused their lives on God given principles. So many pitfalls avoided!

In verse 3, the psalmist described such a person as a tree, "He will

be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers." The image is of a tree that is so deeply rooted that storms, drought, and flood do not affect it. This describes a person whose life is directed by the Word of God. The storms of life will happen, and there are definitely times where the only thing a Christian will have is faith that God will find a solution. And it works! A strong Christians can face, and overcome, terrible trials that would destroy just about anyone else.

Although Psalm 1 was written long before the coming of Jesus Christ, the same principle is repeated time and again in the New Testament. James wrote, "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." (Jas 1:2-4 NASV) Faith must be exercised to become strong. Every person that has participated in a sport has had to train, exercise, and practice. The first few days of training always lead to sore muscles, but each day finds the person stronger. Likewise, the person that "follows the path of righteousness" will develop a faith that is anchored deep in the soil and rock of the Lord.

Civil War and thus may reflect the real origin of the "memorial day" idea. Annual Decoration Days for particular cemeteries are still held on a Sunday in late spring or early summer in some rural areas of the American South, notably in the mountain areas. In cases involving a family graveyard where remote ancestors, as well as those who died more recently, are buried, this may take on the character of an extended family reunion to which some people travel hundreds of miles. People gather, put flowers on graves, and renew contacts with relatives and others. There often is a religious service and a picnic-like "dinner on the grounds", the traditional term for a potluck meal at a church.

On June 3, 1861, Warrenton, Virginia, was the location of the first Civil War soldier's grave ever to be decorated, according to a Richmond Times Dispatch newspaper article in 1906. In 1862, women in Savannah, Georgia decorated Confederate soldiers' graves according to the Savannah Republican. The 1863 cemetery dedication at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, was a ceremony of commemoration at the graves of dead soldiers. Some have therefore claimed that Lincoln was the founder of Memorial Day. On July 4, 1864,

ladies decorated soldiers' graves according to local historians in Boalsburg, Pennsylvania, yet the principal grave they claim to have decorated was of a man who was not dead yet. Nonetheless, Boalsburg promotes itself as the birthplace of Memorial Day.

In April 1865, following President Abraham Lincoln's assassination, commemorations were widespread. The more than 600,000 soldiers of both sides who died in the Civil War meant that burial and memorialization took on new cultural significance. Under the leadership of women during the war, an increasingly formal practice of decorating graves had taken shape. In 1865, the federal government began creating national military cemeteries for the Union war dead.

On May 1, 1865, in Charleston, South Carolina, recently freed African Americans held a parade of 10,000 people to honor 257 dead Union Soldiers, whose remains they had reburied from a mass grave in a Confederate prison camp. Historian David W. Blight cites contemporary news reports of this incident in the Charleston Daily Courier and the New-York Tribune. Although Blight claimed that "African Americans invented Memorial Day in

Charleston, South Carolina", in 2012, Blight stated that he "has no evidence" that the event in Charleston inspired the establishment of Memorial Day across the country. Accordingly, investigators for Time Magazine, LiveScience, RealClearLife and Snopes have called this conclusion into question.

In 1868, copying the Southern annual observance of the previous three years, General John A. Logan of the Grand Army of the Republic, an organization of [Union](#) veterans founded in Decatur, Illinois, established Decoration Day as a time for the nation to decorate the graves of the Union war dead with flowers. By the 20th century, various Union and Confederate memorial traditions, celebrated on different days, merged, and Memorial Day eventually extended to honor all Americans who died while in the military service.

On May 26, 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson designated an "official" birthplace of the holiday by signing the presidential proclamation naming Waterloo, New York, as the holder of the title. This action followed House Concurrent Resolution 587, in which the 89th Congress had officially recognized that the patriotic tradition of observing Memorial

Day had begun one hundred years prior in Waterloo, New York. The village credits druggist Henry C. Welles and county clerk John B. Murray as the founders of the holiday. Scholars have determined that the Waterloo account is a myth. Snopes and Live Science also discredit the Waterloo account.

As we can see, there is a lot of controversy regarding who started our Memorial Day and when and where it started. However, there are two memorials we are featuring in this issue that are more easily nailed down.

While Passover is still celebrated by Jews today, it also has a place in the history of the

Passover is a type of our salvation

church. It was a great type of our salvation with Pharaoh representing Satan, Israel's bondage representing our enslavement to sin, Moses representing Jesus as Savior and the crossing of the Red Sea as our baptism into Christ (see 1 Cor. 10). While we no longer memorialize Passover in the church, we do recognize it as a type of our salvation. It is an important part of the history of God's people on earth.

The Lord's Supper was instituted by the Lord on the night of his betrayal during the celebration of Passover. He used the

supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the Church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you for this? I do not praise you" (1 Cor. 11:20-22).

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Paul makes it very clear that this supper is not a common meal, but a spiritual observance that has definite commands to be followed. Paul continues in this eleventh chapter to tell these brethren about the elements that the Lord Himself has placed in this supper. "For I have received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He brake it and said, 'Take eat this is my body which is broken for you, this do in remembrance of Me.' In the same manner He also took the cup after supper saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. This do as often as you drink it in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this

bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.'" These commands remain the same for us today. It is a serious thing to fail to observe this memorial as the Lord has commanded.

Paul warns about failing to remember the Lord's sacrifice as commanded. In 1 Corinthians 11:27-29, Paul warns of eating of this supper in an unworthy manner. Paul warns that any who do will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. Paul says when we fail to remember the Lord as commanded, we eat and drink judgement to ourselves, not discerning the Lord's Body.

Paul continues in the next few verses to say that because of this failing to observe this supper as commanded, there were some at Corinth that were sick and some slept. Paul was speaking of problems affecting their life of service to the Lord.

We must observe this supper at the proper time, The First Day of The Week. We must include the proper elements, Bread and Fruit of the Vine. We must encourage all to have the proper attitude, Remembering The Sacrifice for our sins made by Jesus Christ Himself.

May God Bless us to Never Forget!!!

Dennis Gage, Benton, AR

Memorials: The Lord's Supper

I stood by the graveside of John Smith. As the casket was lowered into the ground, and the grave was closed, a young man walked up to me and said, "I will never forget John. He showed love and concern for me like no other person ever has. As long as live I will never forget him."

I was impressed by the statement of the young man. His life had truly been touched by John Smith. I couldn't help but wonder, if it is possible to be so determined to remember some person we have known in this life, why is it we have such a difficult time remembering The Lord of Host!!

Of all things, we should never forget the memorial that Jesus Himself instituted as recorded in Matthew 26:26-29. Jesus on the night of his betrayal took bread and the fruit of the vine and told his disciples that it was His body and blood and they were to partake of it. "And as they were eating Jesus took bread, blessed and brake it and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take eat this is my body.' Then He took the cup and gave thanks and gave it to them saying, 'For this is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for many for the remission of sins.'" In Luke chapter 22:19-20 Luke says that Jesus told his disciples to eat this

bread and drink of the cup in memory of Him. "And He took bread gave thanks and brake it and gave it to them saying, 'This is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.' Likewise, He took the cup after supper saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood which is shed for you.'"

We are commanded by Christ himself to remember his sacrifice for our sins; however, we seem to have a difficult time keeping this sacrifice fresh in our memory. The importance of this memorial supper is shown in Acts 20:7. "Now on the first day of the week when the disciples came together to break bread...." The breaking of bread in this verse refers to the observance of The Lord's Supper. The example of the early church shows the importance of this supper and when it should be observed.

We not only have examples of when the supper should be observed, but we also have commands on how this supper should be served. In 1 Corinthians 11 Paul addresses the problems that were going on in the church at Corinth. The church in Corinth was abusing this supper. "Therefore, when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating each one takes his own

elements of that meal to create a new memorial. In fact, the truth of Passover was being fulfilled in Jesus Christ and what he was about to accomplish on the cross. This memorial has a special significance for the church. We are taught to eat this memo-

rial meal to remember the Lord until he returns.

We hope that these articles will inform and inspire as we consider these Memorials.

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Memorials: Passover

God has blessed us with the ability to dull our memory to painful events in our lives. The death of a special person eases over time. A broken relationship of someone dear to us becomes less traumatic with the passing of time. Without this ability life might be too agonizing to continue if all these events remained as unpleasant as they were when they originally occurred. However, some events God wants to be as poignant and fresh as when they first occurred. For the Israelites the Passover was instituted to remind them of an event God did not want them to forget. Life is filled with activities, challenges and matters that demand our attention. It is easy to become so occupied with all these pursuits that we forget important matters. What one of us hasn't felt the frustration of realizing we forgot to do something we needed to do? God appreciates this frustration and has designed memorials to remind us of critical events. A travel through the Old Testament will reveal several memo-

rials. Some were given by God to man and others designed by man as a reminder. Of all the memorials we find in the Old Testament, none could be more important than the Passover. Jesus told his apostles that he "desired with desire" to eat the Passover with them before he suffered in Luke 22:15. The

However, some events God wants to be as poignant and fresh as when they first occurred.

Passover was a reminder to the Israelites how God provided and cared for them. We can see the need as the Israelites no sooner left the captivity of Egypt, came to the Red Sea only to forget God's power to overcome the impossible. Crossing the sea on dry ground and leading them to the Promised Land only to again forget God's power when challenged on overtaking this new country. How quickly we forget God's power and providential

care for us.

The Passover was a new beginning for the Israelites. Their lives had become completely enslaved to the Egyptian powers. There was little hope of life being any better on the morrow. God sends Moses to provide deliverance from slavery and give them hope of a better life. Of course, Pharaoh does not easily want to release his source of

God in his loving care for his people provides an escape from this fearful plague of death.

free, cheap labor. Plague after plague does not move Pharaoh until the ultimate plague. God demonstrates his power over life and death. What frogs, boils and locusts could not do was changed when death of all first born passed through the land. God in his loving care for his people provides an escape from this fearful plague of death. He instructs the Israelites to take a male lamb without blemish of the first year to eat in a meal. They are to eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. The all-important blood of the lamb was placed on both sides of the door and above it. When death came that night to all the first born it passed over all who were inside a house with the blood. God made this a pivotal point in their calendar year (Exodus 12:2). Just as our calendar year

ends and a new one begins; we view it as a time of renewal. Resolutions, new goals, and a forgetting of much of the past usually accompany a new year for us. In like manner, God wanted to mark the event of their departure from bondage and on to the Promised Land as a new beginning. It would all be made possible due to the death of the first born and shielding the Israelites from it. How could anyone forget such a great miracle and blessing? All too easily, it would seem. God knew it would happen and told Israel to set aside a time each year to eat only unleavened bread and remember this special event. That day was to be a memorial to the Israelites so they would never forget (Exodus 12:14). To show their trust that God's deliverance was sure, he told them to eat with staff in hand, shoes on their feet and loin girded so they would be ready to go. The memorial was to be a day without work so they could take time to stop and reflect on God's deliverance. To this day, Jews around the world keep the Passover. To all mankind, it is a demonstration of God's love for all of us.

When we go to the movies, we are given a taste of that which is to come. We call them previews of coming attractions. How many times have we gone to see the previewed movie only to realize the only good parts of the movie were in the preview? Such disappointment to be lured

into a bad movie because it was previewed as something it was not. The Old Testament is full of previews for the coming of the new covenant. Prophets spoke many times of a new day, a better time and a deliverance from the slavery of sin. We usually refer to many of these as types of the real thing, the anti-type. Perhaps the most significant is the Passover itself. It was a preview of that which was to come. All designed by God to let us know what the future held. It was a reminder to his forgetful creation that God does not forget

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about us. As we are reminded in Isaiah 59:1, God is always able to hear us and save us if we will let him. The preview that the Passover presents will not lead us to a disappointing conclusion. The blood of the lamb that saved them from physical death was only to point to the blood of the Lamb of God that would save us from spiritual death. In 1 Corinthians 10 Paul likens the crossing of the Red Sea to our baptism. That crossing allowed them to be completely free from the oppression and threat of

Pharaoh. Paul tells us we are baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27) and Peter told those on Pentecost to be baptized to have their sins forgiven (Acts 2:38). They were freed from Pharaoh and we are freed from sin. How safe the Israelites must have felt in the haven of a home with the blood of the lamb. Death everywhere about them but they were completely sheltered. So sad to think the Israelites would even need a reminder of this great deliverance. What a blessing for them to have this day to stop from their daily activities to celebrate and remember each Passover. How much more special today that we now have the real thing in our grasp. May we never forget.

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“Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the Passover to purify themselves.” -- John 11:55
