

Leviticus 23:23-43 (J.C. Bayley) 145908

Scripture Imagery, Scripture Imagery: 94. Atonement and Tabernacles. the Feasts of Trumpets (23:23-43)

93.—THE FEASTS OF TRUMPETS, ATONEMENT, AND TABERNACLES.

The period introduced by the feast of Pentecost covers a long time, as it pre-figures the present era, and is characterized by a very peculiar feature. It is commanded, "When ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make a clean riddance of the corners of thy field neither shall thou gather any gleanings of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them unto the poor and to the stranger." It is especially the period of charity and grace, during which "the gospel of the grace of God" is proclaimed in contrast with the gospel of the kingdom in the future, "the everlasting gospel" all through, and other characters of dispensation. And even when it is finished, there shall be still a reserve of mercy, gleanings left for the poor [of the Jewish flock] and the stranger [the Gentile] whereof we see the result in the vast redeemed multitude of the seventh of Revelation, assembled after the rapture of the church: "they shall hunger no more....."

Can one see into the future? The learned professor smiles superciliously. He says, there have been plenty of people who said they could, but that is not quite the same thing. Many cases of course where there have been, even with these "monthly prognosticators," happy shots, they could not always be wrong; but as to really foreseeing what is still future, nonsense! Even the most astute and learned are grotesquely often wrong when they forecast a week ahead. "A false prophet is a tautological expression." Do you remember that Abbe who wrote the book proving that the Swedish constitution was now permanently settled, and while he was revising the proofs of the book, Gustavus III. came and upset it all? or the great and far sighted Metternich who said the disturbances in Vienna would be "nothing much," and four days after was flying for his life from his ruined house? or how Napoleon sent off the messenger to Paris from Waterloo announcing that he had Won the battle, just a couple of hours before his defeat? No, no; "better not prophesy unless you know." And you can never know of anything till it is positively there before you. That is the true 'agnostic,' or, (if you prefer the Latin to the Greek word) 'ignoramus,' view of the matter.

Can we then never see the things which are not actually there, the things which are invisible? Do not the travelers see the town of Messina, for instance, when entering the Straits long before it is actually visible? "Yes," the professor admits, "but that is the Fata Morgana." Do they not see the oasis in the desert long before it is in range of sight? "Yes, but that is the mirage." Cannot the whole world every morning see the sun right up above the horizon at the very moment when you, the professor, prove that it is actually out of sight below the horizon "Yes, but that is refraction." Very well then, there is the same power, operating spiritually, which produces by a fata morgana, mirage, or refraction of the celestial medium; that effect which enables us to see "those things which be not as though they were," and to look on the things that are invisible.

The fourth great festival, the Feast of Trumpets¹ has the clearest reference to the in-gathering of Israel after the close of the present period of the Two Loaves. Isaiah says, "Ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel. And it shall come to pass in that day that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria and the outcasts of the land of Egypt and shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem." Isaiah (and other prophets) further explain that in that time the enmity between the ten tribes and the two tribes will be removed.² But in order to be welded together they must pass through a most fiery ordeal, "the great tribulation."

This Reveille was to be on the 1st of the month Tisri, and on the 10th of the month the great day of Atonement was appointed. "Ye shall afflict your souls." In fulfillment of this, Zechariah says,³ "they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced and shall mourn as one mourneth for his only son In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem." They become conscious at last of their great and heinous sin in rejecting their Messiah. This day of Atonement has just been explained in Lev. 16.

Five days after this, on the 15th of Tisri, the last great feast—of Tabernacles is commenced, it continues for seven days. The vast multitudes dwell in the open in booths. They take the branches of goodly trees—willows of the brook which recall their sorrows and banishments, palm branches to celebrate their victories—and rejoice before the Lord their God. In that day—the period here typified—says Isaiah, "the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea."⁴ In that day, says Zechariah, they shall go up to Jerusalem "to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles⁵. . . . In that day living waters shall go out from Jerusalem. . . . In that day there shall be one LORD and His name one. . . .and at evening time it shall be light." It is the beginning of eternal day. The time is come for which all nations long, when Gurmi is loosed from his chain, and, coming out of the dark cave, at last devours the war god Tyr, "and the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come with singing into Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head. . . .and sorrow and mourning shall flee away."