

## *IF WE COULD HAVE BEEN THERE -*

*Would it have been easier for us to believe?*

Accidental occurrences or divine intervention, which?

### **A Story of New Beginnings**

If we could have been there while Noah was building the Ark, watched the animals line up as they entered the ark, seen the rains come down and finally feel the Ark settle and come to rest on mount Ararat, wouldn't it have been easier for us to believe in God?

What about the parting of the Red Sea? If we actually saw the great wall of water mysteriously held back while we walked through on dry ground, wouldn't that be a great faith builder?

Or better yet, what if we had been participants in the first Passover and heard the pitiful wails of despair as the living mourned their dead? Serious business, this religion of the Hebrews!

Can you imagine what it would have been like to watch those great walls of Jericho fall?

Can you imagine the terror if you, your family and your friends had been given a death sentence simply because you were Hebrew? And as the day

approached, the tables were turned and your accusers suffered the very fate they intended for you. It would be pretty easy to believe after a miracle like that, wouldn't it?

Well, we've come this far; let's do one more. Let's consider the resurrection of Christ. If we had watched Jesus die on that cross and then later appear to us, as He did to Thomas, and say, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing;" surely we also would have said, "my Lord and my God" (John 20:27-28).

But we weren't there. We were not a witness to any of these events. How could we be expected to have the faith of the ancients? When Seminaries teach and ministers preach that the Bible is really just a collection of fables collected from various sources over many years, stories that have been told and retold and embellished with each retelling to the point that there is little resemblance to the original event.

How can we know? How can we be sure? Archeologists, historians and various researchers have found physical evidence that these events did occur, but did they occur as we are told in the Bible? Were they truly orchestrated by an all-powerful God who

not only *knows* but also *controls* the end from the beginning? Can we know that they were not just accidental or naturally occurring phenomena? I'll let you decide.

### **Noah's New Beginning**

Consider the first event we mentioned, Noah's ark. Genesis 8:1-4 (NASU) states, "But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark; and God caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the water subsided. 2. Also the fountains of the deep and the floodgates of the sky were closed, and the rain from the sky was restrained; 3. and the water receded steadily from the earth, and at the end of one hundred and fifty days the water decreased. 4. In the *seventh month*, on the *seventeenth day of the month*, the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat," thus, giving mankind a new beginning in a whole new world.

I wonder why God felt that date was important enough to include in the story? Really, does that make any difference? There are 360 days in the Hebrew year, but God chose the 17th day of the seventh month for that event. The probability of an event, happening on any one day of the year would be 360 to one. If that day had been chosen for that specific event it would be pretty tough odds, don't you agree? Ecclesiastes 3

tells us there is a time for everything and God has an appointed time for every event of His plan, as we shall see.

### **Israel's New Beginning**

Now let's consider the parting of the Red Sea. We'll go to Exodus 14:21-22:

“Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD swept the sea back by a strong east wind all night and turned the sea into dry land, so the waters were divided. The sons of Israel went through the midst of the sea on the dry land, and the waters were like a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.”

Did God choose a particular day for that event? If so, what day was it? If we go to Numbers 33:1-8, we read:

1 “These are the journeys of the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt with their armies under the hand of Moses and Aaron.

2 “And Moses *wrote* their goings out according to their journeys *by the commandment of the LORD*: and these are their journeys according to their goings out.

3 “And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; (*Nisan*) on the morrow after the Passover (*still the 15<sup>th</sup>*) the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians. (*Remember, Israel’s days start at sunset*)

4 “For the Egyptians buried all their firstborn, which the LORD had smitten among them: upon their gods also the LORD executed judgments.

5 “And the children of Israel removed from Rameses, and pitched in Succoth. (*Evening of the 15<sup>th</sup>*)

6 “And they departed from Succoth, and pitched in Etham, which is in the edge of the wilderness. (*Evening of 16<sup>th</sup>*)

7 “And they removed from Etham, and turned again unto Pi-hahiroth, which is before Baal-zephon: and they pitched before Migdol. (*Evening of the 17<sup>th</sup>*)

8 “And they departed (*morning of the 17<sup>th</sup>*) from before Pi-hahiroth, and *passed through the midst of the sea* into the wilderness, and went three days' journey in the wilderness of Etham, and pitched in Marah.”

So, as Moses was commanded to do, he recorded the fact that Israel crossed over the Red Sea and physically left the land of Egypt on the 17<sup>th</sup> of Nisan. God removed them from an impossible situation and gave them a new beginning in a new land.

Did you notice something here? This occurred in the first month, but the Ark came to rest in the seventh month. What is the difference between the first month and the seventh month? None. They are the same day. After Israel left Egypt God gave them a new calendar to mark their new beginning. The new (*sacred*) calendar started on the seventh month of the civil calendar, thus the 17<sup>th</sup> day of the seventh month in the days of Noah is the same as the 17<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan in the sacred calendar.

We now have two major events occurring on the same day. The probability of two events occurring on the same day is calculated by multiplying them together –  $1/360 \times 1/360 = 1/129,000$ . So, there is one chance in 129,000 that these two events could occur by accident on the same day.

### **Jacob's Family's New Beginning**

Let's back up about 430 years to the time when the seventy members of Jacob's family entered the land of Egypt? Does God's word have anything to say about

it? Exodus 12:40-41 (*NASU*) will tell us precisely when they arrived.

Now the time that the sons of Israel lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. And at the end of four hundred and thirty years, to the very day, all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.

If it was the very day, as the Bible says, then it would have to be on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan. Again, starting over in a new land that will provide for their physical needs.

By multiplying the probabilities of the three occurrences  $1/360 \times 1/360 \times 1/360$  we have 46,656,000 to one chances that three occurrences would happen on the same day but many years apart. Would you buy a raffle ticket against those odds?

### **Israel's New Beginning In A New Land**

It gets better. Let's take a look at the battle of Jericho (Josh. 5:10-6:3 *NASU*).

“10. While the sons of Israel camped at Gilgal they observed the Passover on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month (*Nisan*) on the desert plains of Jericho. 11. On the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land,

unleavened cakes and parched grain (*15<sup>th</sup>*). 12. The manna ceased on the day after they had eaten some of the produce of the land, (*16<sup>th</sup>*) so that the sons of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate some of the yield of the land of Canaan during that year.

13. Now it came about when Joshua was by Jericho, (*we would assume this to be the 17<sup>th</sup> since the last mentioned date was the 16<sup>th</sup>*) that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us or for our adversaries?" (*A pretty gutsy man, that Joshua; no wonder God chose him to lead Israel*) 14. He said, "No; rather I indeed come now as captain of the host of the LORD." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and bowed down, and said to him, "What has my lord to say to his servant?" 15. The captain of the LORD'S host said to Joshua, "Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.

Joshua 6:1, "Now Jericho was tightly shut because of the sons of Israel; no one went out and no one came in. 2. The LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and the valiant warriors."

Jericho was given to him on the 17<sup>th</sup> of Nisan. All Israel had to do was to have faith enough to follow directions, another new beginning in a new land. They were given the land of their enemies as a reward for obedience.

Now what is the probability of four accidental same day occurrences? Using the same formula as before we come up with one chance in 16 billion, 796 million, 160 thousand.

### **The Temple Given A New Beginning**

Want another one? In 2 Chronicles 29:1-28, we are told of the terrible rundown and filthy condition of the beautiful Temple of God. But when Hezekiah, the 25-year-old son of King Ahaz, became king, he ordered his servants to begin a cleanup campaign and, guess what, your right. On the 16<sup>th</sup> of Nisan the cleaning was finished and on the 17<sup>th</sup> the sacrifices and worship services were started again. Thus restoring an acceptable and proper worship service with a new beginning.

Now we have five of these “accidental occurrences” to calculate. Would you believe that is one chance in 6 trillion, 48 billion, 617 million, and 600 thousand? (6,048,617,600,000)

### **God's People Saved And Given A New Beginning**

Do you remember that beautiful story of Esther? If we follow the events from Esther 3:12 to the hanging of Haman we can determine that it was on the 17<sup>th</sup> of Nisan that Queen Esther exposed the evil Haman's plot to King Xerxes. He was so furious that he ordered Haman to be hanged on the very gallows that Haman had built for Mordecai. And to this day the Jews celebrate the feast of Purim in honor of a beautiful princess who saved her people from death. Their enemies were destroyed from among them, and God's people were saved and given a new beginning.

The probability of six accidental new beginnings all-occurring on the same day of the month figures out to be, one chance in 2 quadrillion, 177 trillion, 402 billion, 436 million.

### **A New Beginning For All Who Would**

What do you suppose would be the most significant new beginning to date? Why the resurrection of Christ, of course!

We know that Jesus was crucified on the Passover. We know that the Passover was the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan. We know that Jesus had to be in the grave three days and three nights in order to fulfill His own prophecy concerning the sign of Jonah. Three days from the

14<sup>th</sup> is the 17<sup>th</sup> of Nisan. Christ was resurrected on Saturday evening the 17<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, a full three days and three nights, no more and no less from the time of His death (*No, it was not on Sunday morning, nor was He crucified on Friday, as any sincere Bible student can determine*), offering all a new beginning, by being born again into eternal life (John: 3).

Hold on to your hats, the probability of all seven of these events all-occurring by accident on the same day is one in 783 quadrillion, 864 trillion, 876 billion, 960 million. But who's counting?

Is it more logical to believe that all these miracles happened on the same day by accident, or does logic dictate that an all-powerful God designated those days for a specific time and purpose?

In the face of these numbers, I believe we have more reasons to believe God's word, His promises, and in our salvation than any of those before us, even those who were actual witness as to the many miracles of history.

If we could have been there we would have less reason to believe than we do now. Let's be thankful for the time in which God has placed us.

Seven miracles on seven separate occurrences of varying circumstances on the 17<sup>th</sup> of Nisan each gave deliverance from seven threats and a new beginning to God's chosen people.

Consider these examples of miraculous deliverances that occurred on the 17<sup>th</sup> of Nisan:

1. When all around you is destroyed, example - Noah
2. Deliverance from overwhelming oppression, example - Egypt
3. Providing for physical needs through any circumstances, example - Jacob
4. Blessings and rewards for obedience, example - Joshua
5. Blessings for proper and acceptable worship restored, example - Hezekiah
6. Protection when surrounded by those who hate you, example - Esther
7. The ultimate deliverance to a new beginning of eternal life, example – Christ.

It is to His glory and our honor to follow Him into a new beginning of eternal life.

**Ye must be born again!**

*(Study John 3:3-8 and 1 Corinthians 15:34-54 for a better understanding of the born again experience.)*

Note that all previous deliverances were physical in nature but the seventh is complete, spiritual and eternal. Seven is the number of completion and rest. Seven is the number of Christ, our rest.

What future events might be in the offing for the 17<sup>th</sup> of Nisan? Something to think about, isn't it?



Del Leger, Pastor, Christian Church Of God. Grand Junction, Colorado.  
www.ccofgod.org, (970) 249-6857. © 2/7/2004. dlleger@montrose.net

### John 1:11-12

“He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”

Other study guides of interest:

**ABSOLUTES**

**GOD'S INTRIGUING CYCLE OF SEVENS**

**CREATED FOR HIS GLORY**

**GOD HAS HIS APPOINTED TIMES**

**BEINGS FROM ANOTHER WORLD**



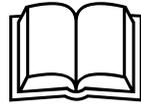
## Matthew 18:2-4

“And Jesus Called A Little Child Unto Him, And Set Him In The Midst Of Them,

And Said, Verily I Say Unto You, Except Ye Be Converted, And Become As Little Children, Ye Shall Not Enter Into The Kingdom Of Heaven.

Whosoever Therefore Shall Humble Himself As This Little Child, The Same Is Greatest In The Kingdom Of Heaven.”

✦ Faith Shines Brightest In A Childlike Heart! ✦



But Then, What Good Is Proving The Bible If It Doesn't Lead You To The Saving Knowledge Of Jesus Christ!

Don't Let Religion Keep You From Christ!



**“And the Lord said,  
If ye had faith as a grain of  
mustard seed, ye might say  
unto this sycamore tree, be  
thou plucked up by the root,  
and be thou planted in the sea;  
and it should obey you.”**

**Luke 17:6**

**KJV**