

The Significance of Nisan 17

The 17th day of the 7th month is the 17th of Nisan on the Jewish Calendar, approximately corresponding to our April 17th. The first biblical deliverance on the 17th of Nisan was through the Ark of Noah at the time of the Flood. There is significance in the fact that the Ark landed on Mount Ararat on the seventeenth day of the seventh month (Gen 8:4). First, it is typological reference to Christ's deliverance. The Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead also on the seventeenth day of the first month (called Abib, during the 70 year captivity the name was changed to that of the Babylonian word for their first month, Nisan). The seventh month of the year as established from the Creation was later changed at the time of the Exodus to the first month (and is the month beginning today's religious year for the Jews). At that time, the Passover was set for the fourteenth day of that month (Exodus 12:2). Christ Jesus, our Passover lamb (I Corinthians 5:7) was slain on that day, but then arose three days later. That day would have been the seventeenth day of the seventh month on the original Creation calendar (today's Jewish civil calendar) (See Dr. Henry Morris, *The Genesis Record*, p. 209). As Noah was set free from the bondage of the Ark, we too were delivered from the bondage of sin on that date.

However, a second deliverance came on the same day, (17th of Nisan) many years later at the parting of the Red Sea. About this time, the Passover was first instituted as the 14th of Nisan where God said: "This is the day you are to commemorate, for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival in the LORD - a lasting ordinance." (Exodus 12:14). The Israelites left Rameses the following day (14th of Nisan) and camped that evening at Succoth. On the 16th of Nisan they traveled again as far as Ethan. The following day they journeyed to Migdol and crossed the Red Sea on the 17th of Nisan (Num 33:1-8).

Before the Exodus, a third deliverance on the 17th of Nisan is the entrance into Egypt and the deliverance from a famine. We know about this event because Scripture tells us that the above exodus occurred on the exact day, 430 years earlier, when the Israelites entered Egypt through Jacob's family. We read: "Now the length of time the Israelite people lived in Egypt was 430 years. At the end of the 430 years, to the very day, all the Lord's divisions left Egypt." (Exodus 12:40-41)

A fourth deliverance occurred on this same day about 40 years later after the Israelites had wandered in the wilderness before being allowed to enter the promised land. After the miraculous crossing of the Jordan during flood stage, the Passover was celebrated (always on the 14th of Nisan). On the 15th, the day after Passover, they ate some of the produce of the land, unleavened bread and roasted grain (Joshua 5:11). The manna stopped the day after they ate of this old food from the land (on the 16th) – there was no longer any manna for the Israelites. Beginning the 17th day of Nisan, they ate of the years new crops in Canaan, the land of promise (Joshua 5:12). That same day Joshua went to check out the walls of Jericho and saw a man with a drawn sword. Joshua asked him if he was a friend or an enemy, where upon this man replied, "Neither, but as the commander of the army of the LORD I have now come." (Joshua 5:14). Joshua then received detailed instructions of how to conquer Jericho. Jericho itself did not fall until seven days later, but in a very real sense the day the angel gave Joshua his instructions was the day in which Jericho fell.

A fifth deliverance on this day occurs about 725 years after the 1451 BC entrance into the Promised Land. After the period of the judges and the subsequent reigns of Saul, David and Solomon, the kingdom was divided and 19 evil kings from 9 different dynasties ruled the northern kingdom of Israel. Judah, the southern kingdom, was ruled by descendants of David. Some followed God faithfully, but others were wicked. One of these kings, Ahaz, was so evil as to cause the Temple worship at Jerusalem to cease. He was followed by his son Hezekiah, a righteous man who cleansed the Temple and restored worship therein. The chronological events of this revival are recorded in II Chronicles 29:1-36 climaxing on the 17th day of Nisan.

Yet a sixth deliverance occurred on this notable day. The book of Esther contains a story about the entire Jewish race being nearly wiped out by Haman, who was under King Xerxes command. Through a long process of Godly intervention, the Jews again are saved on the 17th day of Nisan. Haman had tricked King Xerxes into signing an edict to kill all of the Jews. Esther 3:12 tells us that this signing took place on the 13th of the first month, that being the month of Nisan. Immediately after Esther heard of this decree she had the entire Jewish community fast and pray for three days. When finished so doing on the 16th day of Nisan (Esther 5: 1), Esther went before the king and invited him along with Haman to a banquet the following day – the 17th of Nisan. At this banquet Haman's evil designs were exposed whereupon he was executed by the King and the Jews had been delivered once again.

As mentioned at the onset, by far the most important of all the events that took place on the 17th of Nisan was the resurrection of Christ. A seventh deliverance for all mankind. Christ was crucified on the 14th of Nisan, the day the Passover began. After remaining in the grave for three days and three nights, Christ rose from the dead on the 17th. The mathematical odds against so many major events occurring on any given day are have been calculated as 1 in 783,864,876, 960,000,000. From this alone it is clear that God controls the world and He watches over His people. Isn't it wonderful to have a personal relationship with such a loving and powerful God, who has promised heavenly dwellings for all who follow Him. Certainly, nothing stands in the way of His promise, not even Satan himself.