

## The Selfsame Day

### An Easily Missed Clue

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We are going to go to Ecclesiastes 3:1. This chapter teaches us a major truth, and that is that God is in control of time. He is not merely in control of time; He is in control of time *all* the time. God carefully works out His purpose. Now, this verse accentuates this by saying,

**Ecclesiastes 3:1** To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven.

Now, whose purpose? We could expand on that "every" and say, "Well, my purposes are included." Maybe they are *if* they fit into God's. But of course, it is really God's purposes which He is using to His ends. So, this chapter informs us that the Deists are wrong. God is involved in major ways regarding not just what happens on Planet Earth, but *when* they happen, and the degree to whom what happens impacts upon those involved in the purposes that He is working out.

What is the lesson for us? It is that we must understand that events are not just occurring randomly. There is a guiding Hand directing, but it still remains our responsibility to seek God and His purpose by researching for guidance from His Word. What we find is faith building, if it is believed.

So, today we are going to look at something not generally understood by many church of God members, but which is vital nonetheless to our faith regarding God's oversight of time within His purpose. It also helps to determine the timing of the Wavesheaf offering and Pentecost in years in which Passover falls on a weekly Sabbath. That, incidentally, occurs roughly 10% of the time, and we are in a gap here in which it is not going to fall on a Sabbath until 2021. We have gone through an eight- or ten-year period in which this has not occurred. But we are not going to be spending any more

time on that particular aspect of this subject. I am going to spend the time in this sermonette on something that is a vital clue regarding this issue, and the clue helps support the truth that we must live by every word of God.

The *Interpreters Bible Commentary* remarks that a commentator by the name of Volz says that the statement, "To everything there is a season," is more accurately translated as, "Everything is under inexorable law." That translation indicates a force *makes* things occur, and the force within this context is the living God. Added to that is that the term *season* indicates, "to be fixed" or "to be set," or even better, "to be appointed." Now, that adds to the idea of guidance, indicating a sense of scheduling.

What is this information telling us? That events in God's purpose do not happen randomly. There is a force appointing them to happen, and it happens in this context that that force is God. And thus, we can freely understand that verse as saying—this is a paraphrase—"To every event there is a season and God appoints the timing."

I am unsure what church background the *Interpreters Bible Commentary* has. I think maybe it was Presbyterian, but I am not absolutely positive on that. But I am going to give you a comment from a very fine Baptist work. It is the *Expositor's Commentary* and this comment is taken from the beginning of Ecclesiastes 3:1. The comment helps explain the connection between the context of Ecclesiastes 3 and our responsibilities. Listen carefully to this. It is pretty good:

Verses 1-8 [meaning: Ecclesiastes 3:1-8] have an important connection with the theme of the book and relate closely to what precedes and what follows. Man is to take his life day by day from the hand of God, realizing that God has a fitting time for each thing to be done. The significance of this section is that man is responsible to discern the right times for the right actions, and when he does the right actions according to God's time, the result is beautiful.

I want you to check Ecclesiastes 3:11 and maybe this will explain this a little bit more:

**Ecclesiastes 3:11** [God] has made everything beautiful in [His] time. . .

Put the emphasis on "His." God times things beautifully for His purpose, not necessarily ours. We are taken into consideration, but He is the boss. It is His purpose that we need to latch onto. So God's timing of things is very important to us.

We are going to go back to Exodus:

**Exodus 12:41-42** (King James Version) And it came to pass at the end of the [notice that—definite article there] four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. It is a night to be much observed unto the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the LORD to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.

That is, when their time comes.

**Exodus 12:51** (KJV) And it came to pass the selfsame day, that the LORD did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies.

In this sermonette, I want you to pay attention to the word "selfsame." As you can see, it is used in reference to the completion of 430 years, counted from a previous event. It was *exactly* 430 years *to the very day* from that event. It was not one day more nor one day less. It was exactly on time.

**Exodus 12:14** (KJV) And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.

Focus just for a moment on the term "memorial." A memorial, according to the dictionary I have there at home, is "something serving to keep in

remembrance a person or event." It is something in this case that is a festival—the Days of Unleavened Bread—and thus draws attention to a calendar date the festival is commemorated on.

**Exodus 12:17** (KJV) And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this [what's the next word?] selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever.

We are beginning to see the word "selfsame" tied to a specific date and a specific event. But remember, overall, it is the word "selfsame" that we are paying attention to here.

**Exodus 19:1** (KJV) In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai.

The word "same" in this verse is *not* the same Hebrew word that is translated in some other places as "selfsame." There is a difference in meaning between these two words. "Same" here in Exodus 19:1 is *Strong's Concordance* #1931. (The year Evelyn was born.) The Hebrew term is transliterated into the English as *huw*, and it is pronounced *hoo*. *Huw* means exactly the same as our word "same." It is not "selfsame"; it is "same."

So here in Exodus 19:1, it is indicating the same *day of a week*, but not the same *date* as it was three months earlier. So, we will say they came out on a Thursday, and then three months later they came to this area also on a Thursday. The same day, but not the same date. Notice also, no commemoration is noted either, just the fact that they came into that area of the land.

"Selfsame" is a more specifically expressive term. But when we research "selfsame," we run into some difficulty because modern *Strong's* publications do not even have the word listed. This is why I am using the King James. The King James is correctly translated and the New King James is vague, to say the least. I have a *Strong's Concordance* that Evelyn and I

bought at the first Feast of Tabernacles that we attended in 1960, and "selfsame" is listed in it. It has been eradicated, erased, from the new ones, however.

We are not without another resource. If you do not have an old *Strong's Concordance*, there is another resource. But I think most of you do not have this resource, and that resource is an *Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance*. "Selfsame" is found on pages 972-973, and transliterated into the English as *geh-tzem*. Actually, "selfsame," believe it or not, is two words.

Here comes another interesting fact. *Geh-tzem* is translated eleven times (according to the *Englishman's Concordance*) as "selfsame," and 102 times as "bones." Now, if you are really careful, you can still find *geh-tzem* in the modern *Strong's Concordance*. You will find it at *Strong's* #6106 and it lists "selfsame" as a definition, but not as a heading. And because it is not a heading, you will not find it listed in the beginning section of a *Strong's*. It is almost as if it is not being used. But it is being used, and it does appear in the modern ones—you just have to know how to find it.

So, it lists "selfsame," then, as a definition, but not a heading, and you will find it seven times in the book of Ezekiel in chapter 37. That is the Valley of Dry *Geh-tzem* (Bones):

**Ezekiel 37:1** The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones [*geh-tzem*]

**Ezekiel 37:11-13** (KJV) Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones [*geh-tzem*] are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones [*geh-tzem*] are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves .

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When this chapter opens, it appears that Israel no longer exists except for bones. That is the story. That is all Ezekiel could see. He did not see any people. He saw bones stacked higher than you would ever believe, so that the valley seemed to be almost full of them.

God is using *geh-tzem* to indicate an enduring substance, that is, something remaining of something that existed before. When a body decays, the last thing to decay is bones. That is all that is left. And so, *geh-tzem* means (in some occasions; not every context, but in some) "that which remains" because bones are the last part of a body to disappear. One's bones are the only thing remaining as evidence that, at one time, somebody existed.

This "enduring substance" sense, through the passage of time, became transferred as evidence that something else existed in a prior time. Through time, it came to be applied as historical evidence, a remnant, a memorial of something that previously was. I am giving you the etymology of this word "selfsame." Now, when a historical event is applied to a calendar date—we mentioned calendar date just a little while ago, towards the beginning of the sermonette—it suggests a reference to a significant event that happened in the past, but all that remains from the past is gone except for the memory of what occurred on that date. So the date, then, remains as a memorial of that occasion.

If you are following me, you are beginning to see the meaning of this word changing, gradually forming into something else, and as we saw, it was applied to the Days of Unleavened Bread. It then ties into Exodus 12:41 and 51, where the word "selfsame" was used, and that is the first place that we encountered "selfsame" (*geh-tzem*). Now, because we understand that *geh-tzem* suggests an anniversary of an event, it was the anniversary of an event that took place—remember what Exodus 12:41 and 51 say—it was an event that took place 430 years *to the day* before.

Now, what was that event? Well, first, a brief side trip into the book of Leviticus, chapter 23. We all understand that is where all of the holy days are listed:

**Leviticus 23:14** (KJV) And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

Here the subject is the Wavesheaf offering.

**Leviticus 23:21** (KJV) And ye shall proclaim on the selfsame day, that it may be an holy convocation unto you: ye shall do no servile work therein: it shall be a statute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

Here it is in the context of Pentecost. So, Pentecost is being observed on a selfsame day. Remember, the "selfsame" suggests an anniversary, an anniversary kept each and every year—that is what the verse says: "throughout your generations"—on the date something significant occurred in the past.

What occurred on Pentecost? It celebrates the anniversary that God gave His law on Mount Sinai, and it also celebrates the anniversary of His gift of the Holy Spirit. Two things on the selfsame day. Pentecost is observed partly because of these events.

Now, what is "selfsame day" referring to in Exodus 12? We are not going to go to Exodus 12; we are going to go to Genesis 15:

**Genesis 15:13-18** (KJV) And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down [Did you notice that? That is really

interesting. God times this so precisely for us that the sun went down . . .], and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:

Now, this is the same event that the apostle Paul refers to when God gave Abraham the promise and confirmed it with an oath. Just pay a little bit of attention at this time to the lengths of time referred to in God's promise. What occurred here is called by researchers the "maledictory oath" that God gave. The "maledictory oath" is a very specific oath that all these researchers say appears only one other time in the Bible. That is in the book of Jeremiah. But they know a little bit about it anyway, from other historical references. It was a vow, an oath, where the maker of the oath was vowing that if he did not keep his word, there would be a severe penalty paid by him, and the severe penalty seems to be death. I mean, somebody who took a maledictory oath was really, really sure he wanted the person that he was making it before to understand, "I am really serious."

We are going to go back in thought to Exodus 12:41 and 51, and we are going to compare the events in Genesis 14 and 15 because Exodus clarifies Genesis—that the events in Genesis 14 and Abraham's meeting with Melchizedek took place on Nisan 14, that is, what we now call Passover.

They took place just after the sun set on the 14<sup>th</sup>, and Melchizedek, if you will read that carefully, it simply calls Him, "Priest of Salem." That is significant. He was not merely *a* priest. He simply was *priest*. There were no others. In addition to that, this Melchizedek had enough authority to bless Abraham in the presence and in the name of the Most High God, meaning in this case, the Father. This man was really being blessed. In addition to that, He specifically fed Abram with bread and wine.

You see, the stage is being set for something. We advance the story, then, into Genesis 15:1, and it says there, "After these things. . . ." This is immediately after the events at the tail end of chapter 14. God gave a vision to Abram of Himself. Now Abram was there, alive and alert and awake. He was able to converse with God, who appeared in a vision. Abraham wanted



to be satisfied that he was going to receive a son, and so God did that, and the son is necessary for fulfilling the promise He earlier gave to Abraham that he would become great in number and powerful as well.

That goes down to verse 6, and that section ends by saying, "And he [Abraham] believed in the LORD and He [God] counted it to him for righteousness." He took God's word and believed what God said implicitly.

In verse 7, God begins to give him a little bit more detail of what is going to take place. I will not go through the whole thing. But by this time, guess where we are, time-wise. The implication is that, time-wise, we are in the afternoon of the 14<sup>th</sup>. And what do we use the 14<sup>th</sup> for? It is final preparations for the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for the feast beginning at sundown. And so what did God have Abraham laboring at? He got all the sacrifices ready for the maledictory oath that was going to take place later. He killed all the animals. He cut them the way God said, he arranged them on the ground, the way God wanted them to be arranged. Abraham did not know what was going to take place with those things. He was only told to do it, and that he did.

In verse 12, the timing becomes very clear: "And when the sun was going down . . . ." That means the 14<sup>th</sup> was ending. The preparation for what was going to take place on the 15<sup>th</sup> was all arranged. It was time to quit working. And so the sun was going down. Notice how precisely God is giving us information.

**Genesis 15:17 (KJV)** And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, . . .

What had begun? The first holy day, the day to be much observed had begun. And what happened on that day that makes the Night to be Much Observed so significant? God made the oath that His word could be absolutely trusted, and He made this vow so that Abraham would be impressed that God did this very thing right before his eyes. This maledictory oath.

Now you can check in Numbers 33:3 and Deuteronomy 16:1; they both confirm that Israel left Egypt at night just as the 15<sup>th</sup>, the Night to be Much Observed was beginning.

Let us complete this in the book of Joshua, chapter 4.

**Joshua 4:19** (KJV) And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month [Nisan 10], and encamped in Gilgal, on the east border of Jericho.

Time-wise, where are we? We were in the land and a specific time element is given, Nisan 10.

**Joshua 5:2** (KJV) And at that time the Lord said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time. [And of course he went through with that.]

**Joshua 5:5-6** (KJV) Now all the people that came out were circumcised: but all the people that were born in the wilderness by way as they came forth out of Egypt, them they had not circumcised. [So those were the ones born in the wilderness who were circumcised.] For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people that were men of war, which came out of Egypt were consumed, because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord: unto whom the Lord sware that he would not shew them the land, which the Lord sware unto their fathers that he would give us, a land flowing with milk and honey.

**Joshua 5:10-11** (KJV) And the children of Israel in camp in Gilgal, and they kept the passover on the fourteenth [the same date as the events of Genesis 14] day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho. [that is telling you that Israel kept Passover as the Passover began, at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup>] And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the passover [meaning

the next day after the Passover on the 15<sup>th</sup> and what did they eat?], unleavened cakes, and parched corn [and hallelujah!] in the selfsame day.

Both Passover and the first day of Unleavened Bread were observed exactly 40 years to the day after leaving Egypt. And notice again, it reminds us "on the selfsame day." This is the marker and thus the selfsame day indicates an exactly-dated anniversary. And now here it is roughly 3700 years since the observation began with God calling Abraham, and then providing to him and us His promise, which God confirmed by an oath in which it was impossible for Him to lie.

And so the spiritual descendants of Abraham are still observing their belief in and recognition of God's faithfulness.

Selfsame is a clue. It is a heads up that may very well mark a significant anniversary. It does not always refer to Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread because remember, it was used for Pentecost too in which something significant had occurred. It is a signal though that there is much more there than meets the eye. God is faithfully in control of time *all the time* even though multiple centuries and on forward, right on into eternity, He will always be on time.