

# Liturgy, BC and AD

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*Jer 8:7* Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; **but my people know not the judgment of the LORD.**

The Essenes were apparently an ancient Jewish sect of Dead Sea covenant community dwellers from About 200 BC to AD 68. According to historical evidence, they moved out of their Dead Sea community, perhaps coinciding with an earth quake about 31 BC and did not return until somewhere around the time of the birth of Christ, about 30 years later. Archaeologists have found that they identified themselves, as "*the Congregation of the Poor*" and with the "*meeek who shall inherit the earth.*"

This Dead Sea scroll community called themselves "*the people of the New Covenant or New Testament*". Although some of them may have become Christians after the Romans finally scattered them prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD., scholars believe that they were generally in no sense Christian.

Historical evidence indicates that twice a day they celebrated a solemn communion meal, with the blessing of bread and wine. This, say Scholars, was "*a liturgical anticipation of the Messianic banquet in the coming kingdom*". This apparently was a concept that was a common theme in the Judaism of the time.

Another regular practice of the Essenes was baptism. On entering the community, individuals received a baptism upon their repentance of sins. However, unlike the later Christian practice, the Essenes baptism was renewed each year and supplemented by other continued daily rituals, all purposed to make them spiritually pure by means of these liturgies.

**liturgy** (plural **liturgies**):

*A predetermined or prescribed set of rituals that are performed, usually by a religion.*

The Essenes were zealous for the law and arguably, to a fault. However, they were a dedicated people, a religious people, who no doubt played some part in God's overall plan. Perhaps, among other things, they were a part of helping to preserve and or validate some parts of the ancient texts of the Bible and perhaps other information. Never the less, they were a people who **came to a time of change, and failed, without notable exceptions, to make the transition.**

"**Liturgies**" or literal religious ritual adherence to established religious practices, whether passed on in writing or by oral tradition, were central to the Jewish religion before Christ. Examples include; animal sacrifices, **circumcision, observance of certain days** and feasts, such as the Passover feast, **ritual cleansings** of clothing, the body, and the list goes on.

These "*old testament*" literal practices are known by most Christians, and well documented in the pages of the books of the law, and referenced in other parts of the "*old testament*" of the bible. The genuine liturgies or practices of the Jewish law were ordained of God, with purpose. The purposes can be summed up simply but not completely as; "*types and shadows*" described and practiced in natural terms. These were liturgies which flesh and blood could relate to during the times before Christ (BC), **yet which pointed, mysteriously, to things to come in the Spirit (AD.)**

No wonder, the Pharisees and Sadducees were at odds with Jesus, His message and His works. Everything Jesus said and did was contrary to the doctrine of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. They knew it all. Who was this vagabond, this carpenter's son from Nazareth? He had no seminary credentials, no formal instruction or degree, and the way He talked was even more maddening to them. Nothing He said made any sense from their legalistic, liturgical, or natural mind paradigms. And yet he confounded them with His wisdom at every turn.

[Joh 7:46...](#), Never man spake like this man.

Let's look at a few examples of Jesus' use of their then common literal liturgical language with which He confounded and incensed them:

Joh 6:32 Then Jesus said unto them, **Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.**

Mar 4:11 And he said unto them, **Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables:**

Joh 2:19 Jesus answered and said unto them, **Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.**

Joh 2:20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

Joh 2:21 But he spake of the temple of his body.

Joh 7:37 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, **If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.**

Joh 7:38 **He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.**

Joh 7:39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Mar 4:33 And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, (*his followers*) as they were able to hear it.

Psa 78:2 I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old:

Pro 1:5 A wise *man* will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:

Pro 1:6 To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.

Pro 1:7 The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

What then had a liturgical washing of the outer flesh (baptism) to do with the new covenant except to point to things to come?

What then had a liturgical cutting away of the flesh (circumcision) to do with the new covenant except to point to things to come?

What then had a liturgical observation of a day of the week (the Sabbath) to do with the new covenant except to point to things to come?

What then had the liturgical eating and drinking of a communion meal of bread and wine to do with the new covenant except to point to things to come?

Heb 9:9-10 Which *was* a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;

*Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.*

**Col 2:16-17** Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.

With the coming of Jesus, the Christ, came a new creation, all things are become new, in Christ we are a new creation, old things have passed, a new covenant arrived over two thousand years ago. Why then do we still continue to cling to the old? We came to a time of change over two thousand years ago, will we ever let go of the old religious traditions and finally, fully and completely embrace the new?

**Jer 8:19-22** Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people because of them that dwell in a far country: *Is not the LORD in Zion? is not her king in her? Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with strange vanities?*

The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.  
For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black;

astonishment hath taken hold on me.

*Is there* no balm in *Gilead*; *is there* no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

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