



The Christian life is a journey.

*TrailNotes* speaks to forward movement, paying attention to the “landscape” we are passing through in this trail-laced, wooded hillside and valley, not to mention the world beyond. **TrailNotes** is an unfolding, ongoing journal of the people who share the trail with us and the things we’re **learning** and doing.

## ElderTalk: How are you using your freedom?

ERIC BYROM

It’s interesting to see the prices of gasoline go up and down. Some people will drive across town to save five cents a gallon on gasoline. Many people commute to work and find ways to cut costs of their monthly gas bill. I have enjoyed having a hybrid car, which gets forty miles per gallon in the city.

I have one friend who even went so far as to convert his car to burn natural gas. He found a place that will fill it up near where he works, and it gets really good mileage from using natural gas versus regular gasoline. The type of fuel a vehicle uses brings with it a restriction. If my car uses gasoline, I cannot just go and put diesel into it. I can’t put hydrogen fuel or natural gas fuel into it. I can’t just plug it in like an electric car. If I don’t follow those restrictions, I can ruin my car.

We have to choose the set of restrictions for fuel in our car we will have and purchase that car accordingly. It could be said that once we understand the fuel restrictions for our car, we are then free to use it as it was intended and not damage it by putting in the wrong type of fuel.

In the same way, we as humans were made to do certain things by our Creator. We were made to operate on a certain type of “fuel,” and if we don’t heed those instructions, brokenness will result. Other types of “fuel” may be advertised that promise better results for us, but if we choose to use them, we, like a gasoline car using diesel, will break the “engine.”

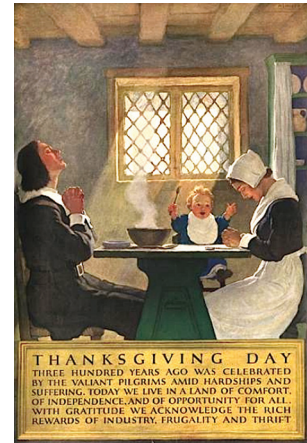
This year, our theme as a church corresponds to our core value of relationship. This core value emphasizes the great commandment which summarized is “Love God, love others.” Our theme this year is taken from I Peter 2:16, which says, “Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.” We are summarizing this by saying, “Use your freedom to love God and others well.”

When we use our freedom for selfishness or sin, we are in a sense putting the wrong kind of fuel into that vehicle of freedom. It will break it and actually result in lack of freedom. As we choose selfishness and sin with our freedom, our world will actually get smaller and smaller. When we choose to love others and God with our freedom, our world will actually open up to many opportunities to do this very thing.

**So, Grace Fellowship, how are you using your freedom to find creative ways to bless others and serve them in love?**

## THANKSGIVING!

Thanksgiving, the American holiday, is all about family reunions, football, roasted turkey, and pumpkin pie. But it also evokes thoughts of the Pilgrims and the first Thanksgiving. Today’s celebration is a blend of three earlier traditions: first, the New England custom of rejoicing after a successful harvest; second, solemn religious observances; and third, the commemoration of the Pilgrim landing.



*A National Service Bureau banking poster from the 1920s*

Celebrations combining sacrifices, rituals, and joyful reveling after a successful crop gathering as the harvest itself. Thus, in 1621, when the Pilgrims’ labors were rewarded with a bountiful harvest after a year of sickness and scarcity, they gave thanks to God and celebrated His bounty. To these people of strong Christian faith, this was not merely a revel, it was a joyous outpouring of gratitude.

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# THANKSGIVING!

(concluded from p. 1)

When the Pilgrims came to New England, they brought with them familiar customs, such as harvest celebrations and a Puritan religious thanksgiving holy day. These two events were not connected. The differences have been blurred, and the two celebrations merged.

A secular celebration, such as a harvest, was an annual event that would include the giving of religious thanks to God.

When things went well, indicating God's pleasure with the community, then it was proper to declare a day of giving thanks. These were often concluded with a feast. But when God's displeasure was evident and events were unfortunate, it was an indication that the community should repent and declare a day of fasting and humiliation.

The harvest celebration of autumn 1621 was neither a fast day nor a thanksgiving day. It was a secular celebration which included games, recreation and feasting with Indian guests. The Pilgrims extended their gratitude to their friends. Only four married women survived the first winter in Plymouth. In fact, the little colony lost almost half of its members. When the next autumn arrived, the women coordinated a great three-day feast. It included cod, sea bass, duck, goose, swan, and turkey. Milk was never drunk whole. Ever since, the Pilgrims have been the originators of the November feast. It helps us remember those hardy people who braved great danger and gave glory to God.

(From: Plymouth Guide 2008, p. 16)



## November 2024



**3** Pastor Eric Byrom preaching on I Peter 2: 11-12.

**5** Election Day.

**7** Women meet for prayer, 9:00-10:00 am.

**10** Children's Shoebox collection—bring your shoebox to church on Sunday.

Greg Frankenfield preaching on 1 Peter 2: 13-17.

**17** Matt Godsil preaching on I Peter 2:18-25. Christmas Shoebox collection. Bring your shoebox to church on Sunday (final time).

**21** Women meet for prayer, 9:00-10:00 am.

**24** Eric Byrom preaching on I Peter 3:1-7.

**28** **THANKSGIVING DAY!**



*The First Thanksgiving at Plymouth, Massachusetts,  
By Jennie A. Brownscombe, 1914*



# Israel's Temple Timeline:

## How much do we really know?

JOHN KURTZ

Read any good books lately? Have you ever read a book through more than once? For me the answer is yes! What changes occurred in the early church during the period between 33 AD and 200-300 AD, and why did they appear? That is a question which has long made me want to pick up and read books covering that specific period of history.

One such book written and published a few years ago by Stephen De Young, an Antiochian Orthodox priest, *The Religion of the Apostles*, fills that bill. I was not disappointed. As a matter of fact, I have now read that book twice.

One of the features of the early church (which I have never been able to fully grasp) has been its ties to Old Testament worship “roots.” After all, the New Testament church did have its “theological beginnings” in the Old Testament. Their God is our God. But what of that Old Testament (Jewish) worship was maintained by our Lord and His disciples? Most of us know so little about that. There was the Tabernacle and then the Temple in Jerusalem.

We haven't heard much about those structures as adults. They, in fact, were subjects covered so well in Stephen De Young's book that it made me aware of how little I actually knew about them previously. It also seemed like a great idea to share a bit of the history of those places where the children of Israel worshiped and which set the “stage” for “...when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son...” (Gal. 4:4) There are things in Jesus' teachings as recorded in the New Testament, which we can understand much better once we more fully comprehend the facts of Old Testament worship and theology.

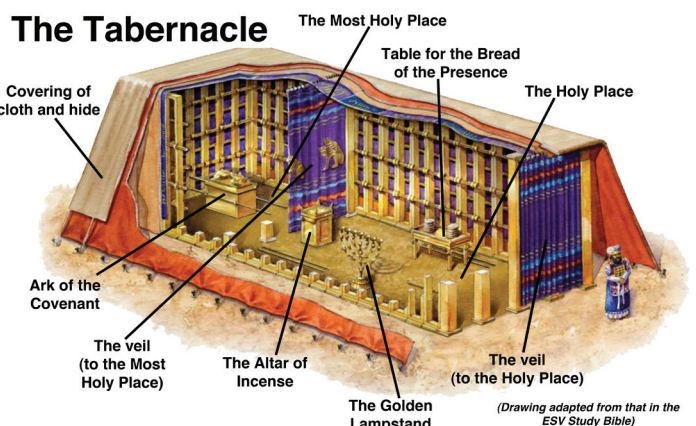
Here's hoping that the historical facts presented in this summary will give others a better understanding of the important “building blocks” of worship from which foundation the early Christians embarked upon their journey in the faith. This is primarily history, but it is *our* history too. It is, after all, a part of His story! For the “theology” involved in this history, I'll refer you to your Bible—it's all there, really! Books, such as DeYoung's do, however, serve as good guides as we search the Scriptures for a better grasp of that part, too.

## The Tabernacle: 1440 BC to 1000 AC

The Tabernacle was built according to God's direction (Exodus 25-40) at Mt. Zion in approximately 1440 BC, the year following the exodus from Egypt. The Tabernacle was completed on the first of Nisan (Exodus 40) and was consecrated eight days later (Leviticus 9). It was the place where God dwelt with His people for 400 years from the time of the Exodus to the fourth year of King Solomon's reign, when the first Temple was built. It was portable and moved with the Israelites from place to place. We might have expected a fuller account of those movements in Israel's history through the centuries. That is not so; after Israel entered the Promised Land under Joshua, almost nothing is known about the structure which was the center of Israel's worship and sacrifice, the place which more than anywhere else was the place of God's dwelling with His people.

Some details, however, were recorded in the books of Numbers, Joshua, and Judges. Once transported into Promised Land, the Tabernacle was set up for about seven years in Gilgal, near the city of Jericho. As this location was not in the geographical center of the nation, it was then moved to a more convenient location, called Shiloh, where it remained for about 350 years. Eventually, Shiloh was destroyed. Somehow the Tabernacle itself was dismantled and survived.

Finally, Samuel assumed control, and the priesthood was restored. He was followed by Saul as king, who brought the Tabernacle to a place called Nob on the north side of Jerusalem. Things did not go well there, and the entire priesthood was murdered. The Ark of the Covenant was brought into the Tabernacle, which Saul then erected in Jerusalem without a proper high priest. For some thirty years, there were actually two Tabernacles and two high priests, neither fully pleasing to the Lord.



(To be continued next month)

# DAVIDIC DANCE

AT GFC ON 10/13/24



*Davidic Dance* is a physical expression of praise, thanksgiving and joy to Elohim (God). The Hebrew word for dance is דוֹקְרָל (pronounced r'kad), which means to skip or leap for joy. Some of the dances are patterned after traditional Israeli folk dances; others are originally choreographed by Messianic believers.



## Grace Fellowship Church

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|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Eric Byrom            | Presiding Elder/ Pastor |
| Jadaé Fox             | Elder                   |
| Matt Godsil           | Elder                   |
| Jerry Mathias         | Elder                   |
| Cameron Karger        | Treasurer               |
| Lori Judd             | Missions                |
| Andy Heining          | Worship                 |
| Judy Nichols          | Prayer Chain            |
| Kay Berry & Jadaé Fox | Office                  |
| Andy Anschutz         | Sound/Power Point       |
| John and Donna Kurtz  | TrailNotes              |