No matter what we do God can use it for good.

What I want to do this morning is show you how God can work with whatever it is we do, even tragic instances in our past and present and future to bring about God’s glory. In the hope that learning this will free you to live as Jesus says, a life more abundantly.

When you hear the word God, G.O.D. what tends to come to mind are attributes. Omnipresent, that God is present everywhere. Omnipotent, that God is all powerful, And the third being omniscient, that God knows everything that is going to happen before it happens.

God has seen history unfold and is prepared for it. And I am going to show you this through an unlikely source, the book of Leviticus. In the book of Leviticus God is setting down ground rules for the people of Israel that is going to set them apart from everyone around them. One of the reasons being, God is dwelling with them.

One of the things that doesn’t get mentioned when talking about things that God give Israel, is the fact that God gave them a calendar. Exodus 12:1-2 “The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, **2**“This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. “

Nissan is the first month of the year for the Israelites, and God tells them that in the first month they will observe certain feasts. The Passover, unleavened bread and first fruits, and then there is Pentecost which is 50 days later.

In the nation of Israel at this time, you would notice something different. During the festivals, the nation would change and not look as it did the rest of the year. Just think about how our country looks different when we have high holidays. During Christmas time there is a lot more red and green around, there are Christmas trees in people’s homes, Florence has those light displays everywhere. Same thing happens in Israel during their holidays.

The Passover is a yearly commemoration of Gods intervention to provide provision for Israel to escape from slavery and be brought into freedom. The Bible tells us Jesus is the Passover lamb the one that dies so that we will not have spiritual death and instead be raised to new life. And the Passover is one of the festivals for which every Jewish person was supposed to go to Jerusalem for. And so when Jesus dies, he dies at a time when Jerusalem is packed full of Jewish people

I don’t think God timed Jesus death to coincide to the Passover, I believe God timed the Passover to coincide with Jesus’ death.

The next day after the Passover is the feast of unleavened bread, and in essence it has already begun because you are eating unleavened bread at the Passover meal. But technically the feast starts the next day. Leviticus 23: 6-8 “And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the Lord; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. **7**On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not do any ordinary work. **8**But you shall present a food offering to the Lord for seven days. On the seventh day is a holy convocation; you shall not do any ordinary work.””

This is seven straight days of eating unleavened bread. And if leaven relates to sin then a week of eating unleavened bread represents purity. They had to cleanse their whole house of leaven. And something interesting happened. Around the same time, Jesus shows up to the temple and cleanses it and kicks out the money changers. He goes to his house to clean out the leaven. He is getting rid of what the leaven represents.

And so when the feast of unleavened bread is occurring Jesus is in the grave defeating sin and death, purifying the people in the same way the people are purifying themselves at the time.

In the middle of the feast of unleavened bread there is the third feast. The feast of first fruits. There were two harvest times in Israel. The wheat harvest is on Pentecost, and the barley harvest was earlier around this time. This is the barley harvest. It is the first thing that started to bare fruit and they are going to take it and wave it before the Lord. And it is the Sunday after the Sabbath, after Passover. And this is happening during the week of unleavened bread. So this is the timeframe.

The Passover happens, and then there is the week of unleavened bread, and in the middle of the week of unleavened bread you have the first fruits offering and it will happen on a Sunday. And if you know your days, something might be clicking in your head. This is resurrection Sunday. The day Christ rose from the dead.

He dies at Passover and rises at the feasts of first fruits. 1 Corinthians 15:20 “But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep”. This is the same book that ties Jesus to the Passover and the feasts of unleavened bread to our own being cleansed of sin, is now tying Jesus to being the first fruits of the resurrection. This is really interesting when you get to Jewish understanding of the resurrection.

One of the obstacles for the Gospel going out among the Jews in the early church was that the Jews expected a big mass resurrection. All of those dead in the Lord would be raised together. Not just a resurrection of the Messiah before everyone else rising from the grave. And here it is embedded in the feasts, a first fruit offering that happens before Pentecost, the mass harvest. And this is what Paul is doing he is trying to show them that Jesus is the sample of the resurrection the firstfruit before the mass one.

And what is beautiful is that what the Jewish people were doing was waving the barley leaves in front of the Lord to show that now the rest of the harvest was cleansed because the one sample piece is waved before the Lord. So the sample piece was used to sanctify the rest of the harvest. This would be in the peoples mind as the disciples would talk to the people around them and try to make these connections for them. That If Jesus is holy, then so are those who are associated with Christ. If Jesus is rising then so are those who are associated with Christ. He is the guarantee.

Okay so we are fifty days after the first fruits and its Pentecost. I think one of the centerpieces of the festival is two loaves with leaven which can be seen as a picture of Jews and gentiles, both groups who are sinners being brought into the kingdom of God. Leaven is an expanding agent and it can be that Gods kingdom is growing just as it does when the Holy Spirit creates the church.

Another connection comes from 2 Corinthians 5:21” For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” The unleavened was offered for the leavened in Christ. Jesus who is perfect and without spot and blemish, without leaven, is offered so that we who do sin and are full of leaven might be accepted before God. Isn’t that beautiful.

So there is a death and resurrection, and 40 days Jesus is with them and he ascends after telling them to wait for the Holy Spirit. Why must they wait in Jerusalem for 10 days, because the feast of weeks was coming, and everyone would be traveling to Jerusalem for the feast. This means that God fore ordained that the largest number of Jewish people would be in Jerusalem to witness the death and resurrection of Christ, and the giving of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2.

What will happen next, they will go back home. God sets up this feast in Israel so that the Gospel would go out like lightning. IT would be like this. I saw Jesus death and heard about the resurrection and then when I went back I saw the miracles at Shavuot and heard about Gods mighty works and then they would tell everyone in their home towns what they experienced

Its amazing the detail that went into the divine plan for the salvation of the world. We think about Jesus death and resurrection and Pentecost and we know that God put things together to unfold and we normally think of it as Jesus dying on the Passover and God chose for Jesus to die on the Passover, And when we look deeper its more than that. God created the Jewish calendar and chose three festivals for all of Israel to have to be in Jerusalem and coincided them to land on the day that Jesus would die, resurrect and when the Holy Spirit would descend. All this so that the Gospel and salvation could be spread.

And you may be asking why would this have to happen, the reason is because God knew the Israelites would go into Exile. And the beauty of it all is that God chooses to use this terrible thing that happens to Israel as a result of their disobedience to bring about the Gospel to the nations as people went back home.

Here is what I want you to take away from this. If God was able to take the worse thing to happen to Israel the exile, and use it for the Gospel, there is nothing in our lives that we can mess up so bad that God could not use for good. And if God can be this meticulous about Israels calendar and their feasts, how much will God care about your life.

It does not matter if I messed up as a child, teenager, young adult, adult, or older person, no matter what has happened in my life, God can use it for good. God can use it for His glory because God is a master weaver. Helping us all the days of our lives taking everything that we have and putting together one beautifully woven tapestry that is our life, bringing good out of everything that we have ever gone through in our life because We know that all things work together for good[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%208%3A28&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-28130a)] for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.