

PASSOVER AND JESUS

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In the days of Yeshua and the Apostles, as thousands of caravans of Jewish families made their way to Jerusalem each year for the Passover celebration (Ex. 23:14-17), the men, women and children would sing praise to God, especially the Psalms of Ascent (Ps. 120–134). These Psalms glorify God as Creator; as the Redeemer of Israel, the One that Israel can trust in; Jerusalem as His city (Psalm 48:2; Mt. 5:35) and Israel as His holy people.

Excitement mounted as they came closer to Jerusalem; the city that harbors all the pain and all the hopes of the Jewish people, thoughts would turn toward the First Passover. Great was the redemption that God did in freeing Israel from Egyptian slavery by slaying all the firstborn of Egypt. The Hebrew firstborn were spared or *saved* from death by the blood of the lamb (Exodus 12:12-14).

This great deliverance set in motion the yearly celebration of Passover, a time to *remember* and re-experience that mighty deed of God. The Hebrew word *zahar* זָכַר means *to remember* or *memorial*, and it has profound significance. When we Jews sit down to eat the Passover meal we envision ourselves *back at the First Passover*. God commands us that we tell our sons that even though we are alive today (3,400 years after the First Passover), we are to say that *we were delivered out of Pharaoh's Kingdom* (Ex. 13:8). All Jews are one with each other; past, present and future. This is known as corporate identity (one body), which is spoken of in the Book of Hebrews.

When Abram paid a tithe to Melchizedek (Gen. 14:17-20), Melchizedek blessed Abram. Hebrews 7:1-10 makes the point that the priesthood of Melchizedek is greater than the priesthood of Aaron because Levi, who wouldn't even be born for another 120 years and from whom Aaron the High Priest of Israel would descend from, *was 'in the loins' of Abram* at the time that Abram gave a tithe to Melchizedek. The author of Hebrews says that "beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the greater" (Hebrews 7:7).

When the Apostle Paul speaks of taking the physical reminders of Yeshua's body and blood (1st Cor. 11:23-34) he says that as often as we do it we are to *remember His death*. What the Apostle is presenting, in Hebraic terms, is that we are not only to identify with Yeshua in His death (Rom. 6; death to self; new life in Him), but of special importance, that we are to understand that we too, were there with Yeshua, at the Second Passover, actually receiving the bread and the wine from our Lord, and also, being crucified with Him in a very torturous and humiliating death. This is also corporate identity.

We are to consider ourselves as having been 'in the loins of the Apostles,' so to speak. With the Holy Spirit we are to *re-experience* those moments and their significance by entering in through the Spirit whenever we take His body and blood, but especially at Passover.

The Passover that Yeshua celebrated before His death is a picture of the sacred banquet that is seen in Luke 13:28-30 and Rev. 19:6-9. God the Father, in Yeshua, and Israel (in the Apostles) at that Passover table were eating and fellowshiping together. It's the strongest possible picture of the Father's *friendship* with us. In the ancient Middle East, if two hostile enemies ate at the same table they had to become the closest of friends. That's how powerful biblical table fellowship is. We who were once enemies of God because of our rebellious Adamic nature (Rom. 5:10), are now Papa God's friends because of the fellowship that we have with Him at the Passover table through His Son—and this is infinitely emphasized because we are eating of the True Heavenly Food—the Lamb of God, who makes us like Him!

The body and blood (bread and wine) are also living reminders to us that Papa God is our Friend. He's the kind of friend that will help us whenever we have any kind of need. They also picture the kind of love that

we must have for the Body of Messiah, who also eats of Messiah's body and blood. In other words, when we take the wine and the unleavened bread we should realize that we are to forgive and love all those who call themselves believers in Messiah Yeshua (and everyone else), just as His blood and body have made it possible for us to experience the forgiveness and love of Papa God.

DAILY REMINDERS

Yahveh commanded Israel to remember *every day* what He had done for them. Deuteronomy 16:3 states, 'you must remember every day of your life, the day that you came out of the land of Egypt.' This means they saw themselves being delivered by God from Egypt every day, and of course, they would be very grateful and they would live their lives accordingly.

God also gave them a daily concrete reminder that reflected their past salvation. Every morning and every evening (late afternoon) the priests would sacrifice a lamb, with its complement oblation (grain offering) and libation (wine offering; Ex. 29:38-42). These daily sacrifices allowed them to remember and *re-experience* their salvation from Egypt by Yahveh, twice a day.

The daily sacrifices also prophetically pictured the body and the blood of Messiah Yeshua. The oblation (fine grain) pictured His body and the wine represented His blood. The daily lamb sacrifices pointed to both the First Passover in the past and the Second Passover in the future (Yeshua's in Jerusalem), as well as being an immediate reminder of their Savior God and how He is an *ever present* help in times of need.

The blood of the Passover lamb is represented by the wine of Passover, which is a rabbinic tradition (wine not being mentioned as part of Passover in the Scriptures).¹ The Rabbis say that the wine must be red, in order to symbolize the blood of the lamb. To make wine the grapes must be stomped on or *crushed*. To make flour for bread the whole kernels must also be crushed.

Yeshua was the grape and kernel (wine and bread) crushed for us that we might be able to sit at the Passover Table and eat the Food of God, heavenly Food—God the Son Himself. Isaiah 53:10 speaks of this transformation process for Messiah when he says, 'Yahveh has been pleased to *crush* Him,' because the Father knew the Joy it would bring to believers.

Matza—Unleavened Bread

The bread that God requires to eat at Passover is a special type of bread that reflects the sinless purity, humility and crucifixion of our Messiah. Israel was commanded to eat this bread at the First Passover (Ex. 12:8, 15-20; 13:3-10) and every subsequent Passover thereafter. This bread is *matza* מצה (Hebrew for unleavened bread) and would remind Israel of their affliction in Egypt, God's great salvation and His desire for Israel to be holy.

Matza is the bread that Yeshua used at His last earthly Passover to picture His crucified body. He held the *matza* up and declared, 'This is My body.' Then He broke it and passed it out and all the Apostles, except Judas, ate of it (Mt. 26:20-26; John 13:2-30).²

¹ Exodus 12:8 lists the three foods God commands must be eaten for Passover as lamb, *matza* and bitter herbs.

² The Roman Catholic idea behind their eucharist is not biblical, but very pagan. The Roman Catholic Church says that when a priest prays (in Latin) over their wafer and wine, the wafer and the wine *literally* become the real body and blood of Jesus. They actually bow down to it, do homage to, and worship the wafer, something that has

In 1st Corinthians 5:6-8 the Apostle Paul presents to his mostly Gentile congregation, how even,

‘a small amount of yeast is enough to leaven all the dough, so get rid of all the old yeast and make yourselves into a completely new batch of bread, *unleavened*, as you are meant to be.’

Leaven or yeast symbolizes the sin of pride because pride, like yeast, puffs one up. That’s why the Sons of Israel were commanded to celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days because God wanted Israel to especially remember that He had delivered them out of Egypt, *not to do their own thing*, but to be a pure and holy consecrated people unto Him.

Seven is the number of perfection, wholeness and completion (e.g. Creation week) as well as representing holiness (God’s holy Sabbath is on the 7th day of a seven day week; Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 20:8-11). Seven is a unit of time and as such, represents another unit of time—a year. When we eat *matza* for seven days we’re symbolically saying that we will walk in holiness, and not in pride (sin), for the coming year, until the next Passover when we observe it again.

That’s why Yeshua, the Sinless Holy One, was able to say that the *matza* was His body, for it *symbolizes* sinlessness, purity, holiness and affliction. Matza has no yeast, so symbolically it’s not full of pride, but humble, not puffed up (Mt. 11:28-30). It pictures affliction (suffering; Yeshua’s and Israel’s) in that it not only looks ‘less full’ than bread with yeast, and therefore, ‘poorer’ or afflicted (Ex. 4:31; Dt. 16:3; 26:7), but it has black marks or stripes (scourging) in it from baking, and also holes in it, which allow for the *matza* not to bubble over (like pizza dough sometimes) when it’s being baked. The stripes and holes picture the affliction, scourging, piercing and crucifixion of Yeshua so that *we* could be healed and made ‘one with Papa God’ (Is. 53:5; Zech. 12:10; Mt. 27:26, 35; Jn. 19:34; 1st Peter 2:24). Yeshua was afflicted for us (Is. 53:3-12; Zech. 13:7; Jn. 10:11f.) that we might be healed. Yeshua is the pure Bread (*Matza*) of Life that has come down from the Heavens (Jn. 6:26-40). Anyone taking leavened bread, bread with *yeast* in it for communion is saying that Yeshua is full of sin! These are the reasons why it’s so important to have *matza* for remembering His death, and why God wants us to continue to celebrate His Feasts—they all picture what Papa God and His Son have done for us in this great salvation.

The Never Ending Matza

When Yeshua multiplied the loaves for the 5,000 men, not counting the women and children³ (John 6:10) the immediate reference was obvious to the Jewish people there. God, through Moses, had provided *manna* (*unleavened* bread) for Israel in the Wilderness. Yeshua, performing a *similar* miracle, revealed Himself to His Jewish people as the Redeemer–Messiah, the King of Israel; the one like Moses (Dt. 18:15-18; Jn. 6:14-15), for just as Moses ‘provided’ manna in the Wilderness, so Yeshua provided bread miraculously for Israel that day.

Also significant in the multiplication of the bread is that ‘in Yeshua,’ the *Matza* (Unleavened Bread) of Life, there is *more than enough for all of us*, just as there was for the Jewish people that day in John 6 and

no biblical foundation. When we take the *matza* and the wine (or grape juice) we are proclaiming, in no uncertain terms, that Yeshua is present with us by His Spirit and that we are ‘one’ with Him and that His sacrificial death is sufficient for all our needs; spiritual and physical, pictured in our eating the *matza* and drinking the wine. It’s the presence of the Holy Spirit that applies the reality of His body and blood into our lives. Yeshua, using the *matza* and the wine, means that *everything* that Yeshua is, is pictured in them. He is salvation and life eternal and with the Holy Spirit we enter into His reality, and we are satisfied because all our needs have been provided for.

³ Scripture usually counts only men, not women and children, as the men are the authority and the head of the home, and women and children are considered ‘one’ with them (Numbers 1:1-3ff.; Ezra 2:1f.; Nehemiah 7:1f.).

for Israel for 40 years in the Wilderness. Today, after 1,900 years, we who are alive are still being fed off of the breaking (crucifixion) of the *Matza* of Life. He continues ‘to multiply’ Himself to feed and satisfy us.

Whenever we take the body and the blood we are to *remember* that we are back there at the Second Passover with Yeshua and all His followers—past, present and future. All Israel, both Jew and Gentile who love Yeshua, is at the Passover Table with God the Father through God the Son. We are not only a friend the Father, but because we are eating and drinking of His Son, we will become like Yeshua is now (the God-Man). This is the Promise (Rom. 8:29-30).⁴ It’s a spiritual reality that ‘we are Who we eat.’

Red wine is a symbol of Yeshua’s sacrificial death (His blood), and also a symbol of the Joy of our salvation, wine having this double meaning in Scripture (Ps. 104:15). In Exodus 12:14, God declares,

‘This day is to be a day of remembrance for you and you must celebrate it as a feast in honor of Yahveh.’

The Hebrew word for ‘celebrate’ means ‘to rejoice mightily.’ *This is the proper attitude* for taking His body and His blood and can only come from the Holy Spirit. This is the proper attitude for acknowledging what Papa God has done for us in setting us free from our enemies—sin, sickness, Satan and death.

In ‘discerning Yeshua’s Body’ before eating (1st Cor. 11:29), we must ask Him to forgive us for any anger, resentment and jealousy we might have toward others (i.e. not being able to forgive others from our heart), and any resistance we might have in fully surrendering ourselves to Him. **Now** we are ready to eat of Yeshua’s body and drink His blood without incurring guilt. It’s for these very reasons that we need His cleansing blood and healing body, to begin with, but we must be willing. As we yield ourselves to Yeshua, He feeds us what we need to grow into His Image and Holiness—to have His heart of sacrificial and forgiving love.

At this point the Lord usually takes away all our resentment or bitterness right then and there, and fills us with a love and forgiveness for the person, but if He doesn’t, we look to Him in faith, *trusting* Him and walking with Him, believing that He will do it, and also, asking Him to set us free from any inhibitions or fears against freely offering ourselves to Him.

Helpful in dealing with our stubborn carnality is the scene at the Second Passover (Jn. 13:1-30) where Yeshua washes the Apostle’s feet. Peter strongly objects, but finally consents. Most rightly understand this as a lesson in humility, but few realize why Peter objected. The only person who washed other peoples’ feet in Israel was the lowest Gentile slave in the house. *Jewish* slaves weren’t to wash the feet of their Jewish masters. Marshall writes, ‘Only non-Jewish slaves were required to perform this menial duty for their masters.’⁵

The Master of the Universe had taken upon Himself

⁴ The gift of eternal life that the Father holds out to every human being is nothing less than becoming like Yeshua is now—the glorified God-Man. The only difference between us in eternity will be that Yeshua was always God the Son, while we will be deity by the new creation because of His sacrificial blood, for the life of the flesh is in its blood (Lev. 17:11) and the Father has given us His Son’s divine blood that we might be transformed into His Son’s very image on Judgment Day, for only ‘one like’ the Son of God can marry Yeshua. Hence, why we are also known as the Bride of Christ (Eph. 5:32; Rev. 19:7-9; 21:2, 9, 17). Truly, what a great gift the Father and the Son hold out to us! (See *Salvation—The Promise!* at <http://seedofabraham.net/Salvation-The-Promise.pdf>.)

⁵ I. Howard Marshall, Author; I. Howard Marshall and W. Ward Gasque, Editors, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary: The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978), p. 146. Taken from *Midrash Exodus 21:2 (82a); Keth. 96a.*

the Role of the Lowest Slave in the Land of Israel

Adding to this divine humiliation, Yeshua washed the feet of Judas, the one He knew would betray Him. Yeshua did it to show Judas, the other Apostles, and all of us today that there is absolutely *nothing* that He will not do to *serve* us—to see us set free from sin, sickness, Satan and death and to help us to grow into His Image in *this* lifetime, and to help us overcome every physical, emotional, mental and spiritual obstacle that would seek to keep us from walking in intimate fellowship with Him now, so that we can live eternally with Him in the New Jerusalem. ***This*** is our Messiah!

Now, when someone has hurt us, or rejected us, or when we have sinned against Him, or when we are angry with someone, or have bitterness or resentment against others, we can call upon Yeshua *and picture Him beginning to wash our feet*. He looks up into our eyes and tenderly asks us to give Him that pain, or sin, or anger/bitterness or resentment. I dare say that our pain and/or anger, etc., would melt away as feelings of awe, gratitude, love and humility pervade our being. The Lord Yeshua cares for you. This is how He transforms you—by His faithful forgiving-loving kindness. There is *nothing* that you will ever need that He cannot supply. He came to love and serve you (Mark 10:45) so you can walk with Him along the Highway of Holiness, giving you whatever you need, whenever you need it.

Yeshua wants to give us a new heart (Ezk. 36:24-27), filled with *His* love; a love that is strong enough to forgive and love our worst enemies—a love much more powerful than hate, bitterness and rejection. We cannot love our enemies in our own strength. This is one of our greatest needs that Yeshua brings to us and we have it because of His broken body and shed blood, pictured in the matza and wine of Passover. As we eat of our Messiah we become like Him, to the Glory of Papa God who has wrought this Great Redemption!⁶

***You see, we're all a lot like Judas...
but oh what a Friend we have in Jesus!***

⁶ Revised on 11 April 2017.