

WHY IS THIS NIGHT DIFFERENT?

WHY MATZA?

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Did you ever wonder why God commanded us to eat matza (unleavened bread) for Passover? Sure I know, we had no time for the dough to rise. We had to leave Egypt in a hurry. If one places yeast in dough and lets it off on a journey, the yeast will not properly effect the dough to make it rise. But didn't God know that Israel was about to embark on a long journey? Of course He did. Then why didn't He tell Moses a few days earlier to prepare regular bread so they'd have enough for the trip?

The answers to those questions take us beyond the realm of the superficial to the deep mysteries of God. The ancients understood the function of placing yeast into the dough to make it rise. But they also saw how pride in a person, puffed that person up. The parallel was simple. For Passover, yeast with bread represents sin.

At Passover and the ensuing seven day Feast of Matza, God commands us to eat matza. But it doesn't stop there. He also demands that we eat no leavened bread, that it be not found or even seen in our homes or even in our territories for those seven days (Ex. 13:3-10). God had freed Israel from Egyptian slavery and sin was not to be seen in the Camp of Israel.

The LORD was declaring to Israel that He freed us, not to do our own thing and die in our stubborn pride, but to be holy unto Him. Seven is the number of completion, wholeness or holiness. There are seven days in a week and seven days in the Creation of the Heavens and the Earth. As we take of the matza for those seven days, a complete unit of time, we are saying to ourselves that we will walk in holiness for the rest of the year, another complete unit of time...till the next Passover.

The Middle Matza Broken for You

In the Passover Seder there is the ceremony of the Three Matzot, the three pieces of unleavened bread. They are either placed in a Matza Pouch or under a napkin. The middle piece of matza will be taken out and broken in half. One half will be placed back inside the pouch between the other two pieces of matza, and the other half will be wrapped inside a napkin and hidden in a part of the house. After the meal, the children will be released to try and find the hidden piece of matza. The one who finds it brings it to the father and is rewarded with a silver coin.

The host will then raise the matza and declare,

'All who are hungry and afflicted, come to this table and eat.'

He then lifts the matza up, blesses God for redeeming Israel from Egyptian slavery and passes the matza around for all to eat of it.

We Jews are the most brilliant people in the world. We must have at least five reasons why we do what we do. So tell me, why this ceremony? First of all, why three matzot?

The best that our Rabbis can decipher from this is that they either represent Abraham, Isaac or Jacob, or the three layers of society in ancient Israel; the Aaronic Priesthood, the Levitical Priesthood and the rest of Israel. True, there is a parallel with three matzot, and three Fathers, or three divisions of Israeli

society. But why then is either Isaac or the Levitical Priesthood broken? (the middle matza) No Rabbi seems to know the reason.

Second, why do we hide the middle matza? And third, why do we reward the child with a piece of silver for bringing the hidden matza to us?

The ceremony of the Three Matzot represent the Death, Burial and Resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah of Israel. The breaking of the matza is the breaking or crucifixion of the Son of God, the middle Person of the Godhead.

The wrapping of the matza in a napkin depicts the burial of Yeshua. The child bringing the hidden matza into view again, declares the resurrection of Yeshua. Silver is the metal symbolic of redemption (Ex. 30:11-16). This piece of matza is called both the bread of affliction and the bread of redemption. Yeshua has redeemed us from a slavery worse than that of Egyptian; slavery to sin.

The Three Matzot represent the Trinity of the Godhead. The Father, the Son and the Spirit of the Holy One. The Three are One. Truly a great mystery. The three matzot are covered by a napkin or placed in the pouch. Either way, they cannot be seen...and neither can we see God.

Matza = The Pierced Body Of Messiah

The LORD God of Israel, speaking through His prophet Isaiah declares about the Messiah:

‘And yet ours was the sufferings he bore, ours the sorrows he carried. But we, we thought of him as someone punished struck by God and afflicted. Yet, *he was pierced through for our stubbornness*, crushed for our sins. On him lies a punishment that brings us peace, and through his stripes we were healed’ (Isaiah 53:4-5).

When you eat the matza at Passover this year, I want you to notice all the holes in it. Matza is pierced so that the heat won't cause it to have air bubbles. Isaiah speaks of our Messiah being pierced. In the New Covenant Yeshua has His hands, feet and side *pierced through* at His crucifixion. Isaiah says it was because of our stubbornness. The Messiah was pierced because of our rebellion to God.

We Jews are the most brilliant people in the world, but we are also the most stubborn! I should know for I am a Jew. Stubborn is defined as; ‘unreasonably or perversely unyielding, obstinate.’ Do you know anyone like this?

God goes on to say that the Messiah would be ‘crushed for our sins.’ The matza first came from whole kernels. These had to be crushed into a fine flour, mixed with water, olive oil and salt (biblical matza) and placed in an oven. John, a Jew who walked with Yeshua writes that Yeshua said,

‘...If you do not eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood you will not have Life in you. Anyone who does eat My Flesh and drink My Blood has Eternal Life, and I shall raise him up on the Last Day’ (John 6:53-54).

At the Passover before His death, Yeshua told His Jewish followers that the matza was His Body. Matthew, another Jewish follower of Yeshua records,

‘Now as they were eating, Yeshua took some matza, and when He had said the blessing, He broke it and gave it to the followers. “Take it and eat,” He said, “this is My Body.”’ (Mt. 26:26)

The Messiah was crushed at the crucifixion. In many places of the New Covenant it speaks of Yeshua being filled with the Spirit of the Holy One. Luke records that,

‘...while Yeshua, after His own immersion was at prayer, the Heavens opened and the Spirit of the Holy One descended on Him in bodily shape, like a dove. And a Voice came from the Heavens, “You are my Son, the Beloved; My favor rests on You”’ (Lk. 3:21-22; also Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11).

The Messiah is *the* Anointed One of God the Father. He gives the oil of anointing to all who know Him. When Yeshua was pierced, God the Holy Spirit was released to dwell in all who would believe in Yeshua. This Oil of Anointing now dwells within all who follow Him.

With His crushing we are now able to eat of Him. In His fleshly state we couldn't do that. The crucifixion was the furnace that crushed and 'roasted' Him (Ex. 12:8-9) . Now we are able to be fed by our God. 'But it pleased the LORD to crush him' Is. 53:10.

Twice in Scripture, Deut. 4:20 and Jer. 11:4, the LORD calls Egypt an 'iron furnace'. An iron furnace is so hot that it literally melts iron. Biblically it's symbolic of intense affliction. Israel was supposed to come out of Egypt humbled and crushed, holy unto the LORD, from our time spent in the Egyptian furnace. But this was not the case. We came out a rebellious brood that would die in the wilderness because of the leaven in us. We despised the LORD. Numbers 14:11 reveals that God was fed up with us. It states,

'And the LORD said unto Moses: "How long will this people *despise* Me?!, and how long will they not believe in Me, for all the miracles which I have done among them?"

Yeshua crucified allows all, both Jew and Gentile, to eat of the True Mana from Heaven and absorb His holiness. There is truth in the saying, 'You are what you eat.'

In order to eat the matza of Passover, the whole kernels must be crushed into a fine flour. At the appropriate time, the head of the household declares in the ceremony, 'All who are hungry and afflicted, come to this table and eat (matza)!' What you are eating is the crushed Body of the Risen Savior who was crushed for your sins.

The word 'sins' there, means where we think we understand who God is but really don't. It's the god of our understanding, not the God of Israel. This is idolatry, worship of another god. We are perverse in our thinking, and therefore our actions before Him. This is why the Messiah was crushed; so we could come to the Passover Table and eat the Bread of Affliction in order to be freed from sin. Yeshua is the True Matza of Passover, which the original matza pointed to.

His punishment brings us shalom, peace with Papa God. Because Yeshua was afflicted, we are declared 'not guilty', atoned for by His Blood. We who believe in what He has done, stand before the Living God covered by the Blood of His Lamb. Wasn't it by the blood of the Passover lamb that the firstborn of Israel were spared from death? Our Scriptures declare that 'it is blood that atones for a life' (Lev. 17:11).

Look at the matza at Passover. Notice the brown spots? These are called bruises. Isaiah speaks of the Messiah being bruised when he declares that 'through his stripes (bruises) we were healed.'

The matza of Passover is a graphic picture of the crucified body of Messiah Yeshua. The piercing, the crushing, and the bruises. This is why the LORD commanded that matza be the bread of Passover which Yeshua could say was Himself, 1450 years after the Exodus out of Egypt. Matza is equal to redemption and affliction. A pure, sinless and holy bread. Yeshua is the Matza that has come down from Heaven that gives us Life and True Freedom. Isn't that what the Messiah was supposed to do?

Yeshua is Revealed In the Breaking of the Matza

After God raised Yeshua from the dead, the Messiah was walking on the road and met some of his followers. They didn't recognize Him but eventually got back to their home and invited Him in. Luke 24:30-32 states,

‘Now while He was with them at table, He took the matza and said the blessing; then He broke it and handed it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; but He had vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us as He talked to us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?”’

It is my prayer this year that as you break the matza, Messiah Yeshua will be revealed to you. He has set you free from a bondage much worse than Egyptian slavery; that of slavery to a rebellious and perverse heart.

This night is different from all other nights because on this night God moved in a way that He never had before, and never will again.

On this night He killed all the first born of Egypt, to set His Firstborn Son Israel free. And on this night, He sacrificed His Firstborn Son Yeshua, to free Israel from slavery to sin and eternal death.¹

Our sins nailed Him to the tree, but what kept Him there was His Love for you and me.

Is it possible to have a living relationship with the God of Israel? I know you can. Turn to Him and you will know that this Yeshua whom I speak of is your Messiah. ‘Seek the LORD while He is still to be found’ (Is. 55:6).

Call me and we'll talk about what the God of Israel has done for you in setting you free from the darkness of your heart, a bondage much greater than Egyptian slavery.

All you who are hungry and afflicted, come to *this* table and eat the Matza of Life!

Yeshua Our Messiah

‘Yeshua said to them, “I am the Bread (Matza) of Life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry...”’ (John 6:35)

‘I have broken the yoke that bound you.’ (Lev. 26:13)

Yeshua cleanses us from our sin, to live this life, and the next, in holiness. *This* is the Mighty Work of the God of Israel for us. Believe it and be filled with Joy from Above.

¹ Actually, it was the next day (the same day in the Hebrew calendar) that Yeshua died at 3 PM, but the sky grew dark from noon on and when he died it looked like it was the middle of the night!

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