



OUTREACH ISRAEL NEWS

REACH TEACH ENCOURAGE DISCIPLE



MARCH 2009

PASSOVER

Paradox or Outreach?



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STATEMENT OF BELIEF

Outreach Israel Ministries and TNN Online

There is One Almighty Creator God of the Universe, who has revealed Himself to us in the manifestations of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) came in fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies of the Scriptures and is fully God. It is mandatory for us to believe in a Divine Redeemer to be saved. Salvation is a free gift of God to all who receive Messiah Yeshua into their lives and confess of their sins. Those who reject Messiah will be consigned to eternal punishment.

The Holy Scriptures, Genesis-Revelation, are the inspired, infallible Word of God as revealed in the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts.

There is only one assembly of chosen ones/elect, the people of Israel, of which all Believers in Messiah are a part. God does not have two groups of elect: Israel and "the Church."

The Torah (Genesis-Deuteronomy) is the foundation of all Scripture, was followed by our Messiah Yeshua, and is to still be followed and studied by Believers today.

Yeshua the Messiah is coming to gather the saints after the Tribulation period.

OIM is an *agapē* ministry, freely and benevolently giving the vast majority of its teachings and resources, without charge, to those who desire to be spiritually nourished.

For a fuller Statement of Faith, consult the OIM website

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OIM UPDATE

March 2009

The *moedim* or appointed times of the Spring are rapidly approaching, bearing with them an excellent opportunity to not only exercise our faith, but share with others the hope that is within us! With this in mind, this month's lead article "Passover: Paradox or Outreach?" is an exhortation to take this unique annual celebration to introduce others to an integral aspect of our Messianic lifestyle: the Passover *sedar*. Rather than getting into all of the superfluous debates that typically surface at this time of year about the calendar and on which days we are to celebrate what¹—it is our hope that the arrival of Aviv/Nisan and the Spring festivals can be used as a testimonial vehicle for reaching out to family, friends, fellow workers, and acquaintances. It is certainly an excellent opportunity for Messianic Believers to express commonality with the Jewish community.

With all of the financial challenges facing people in the marketplace this year, we have also reproduced a recent McHuey Blog post called "Anxious Hearts." This was written to encourage our readers to take advantage of the crisis rather than succumbing to it. Look at this as an opportunity to share words of true hope and wisdom with beleaguered souls you encounter, who are looking for answers to their problems. I pray that this exhortation will encourage many to be sensitive to the Lord to lovingly share the hope that is within them.

We are approaching a very special time of year, and you may wonder about a few of the things that go on and how they are to be conducted. This edition of OIM News has included a few kosher recipes that are useful during Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread. Our *Messianic Spring Holiday Helper* is a compilation of articles and resources that can focus your remembrance of the Spring holidays, which is available for purchase, including an abbreviated *haggadah*. My *Counting the Omer: A Daily Devotional Toward Shavuot* is also very helpful. Please also remember that we have an extensive FAQ section on the TNN Online website about the Passover season, which can aid any queries that come your way.

Have a blessed Passover!

From our household to yours,

Mark Huey

¹ For a discussion of this, consult the McHuey Blog post "A Few Thoughts on the Calendar" by J.K. McKee, available for access at <<http://mchuey.wordpress.com>>.



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PASSOVER: Paradox or Outreach?

by Mark Huey

The return of temperate sun soaked days, coupled with drenching Spring rains to the Northern Hemisphere, rekindles growth in the dormant flora while igniting the migratory patterns of the reinvigorated fauna—ranging from insects to crawling creatures to birds. Of course, the majority of humanity birthed in the “cradle of civilization” that has remained north of the equator is not overlooked. Certain “rites of spring” and/or other seasonal traditions, celebrating what appears to be the tangible rebirth of life, are repeated around the globe. The multifaceted cultures of the world are replete with various ways to acknowledge that human life, as it is known and appreciated, continues to enjoy another day of existence. Lamentably for many, living for the moment by eating, drinking, and indulging in the desires of the flesh is all that matters, because adherence to the ancient pagan philosophy that “tomorrow we die” (Isaiah 22:13) predominates many of these heathen activities.

Yet for those influenced by the Holy Scriptures in the Judeo-Christian world, there are other choices for annual celebrations occurring in the Spring season—depending on your perspective—for observation or participation. These commemorations are not inspired by new growth in the vegetation, the lengthening of days, or the smells of flower blossoms or budding trees (although each of these are evident). Without getting into all of the calendar debates that often manifest themselves, the Bible admonishes, “Observe the month of Abib and celebrate the Passover to the LORD your God, for in the month of Abib the LORD your God brought you out of Egypt by night” (Deuteronomy 16:1). The development of the Hillel II lunisolar calendar, used by mainline Judaism and Messianic Judaism today, unites the worldwide Jewish community as to when the month of Aviv/Nisan begins and when faithful Jews are to celebrate Passover every year.

For those involved in a Messianic expression of faith, who consider themselves to be the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16), the requirement to remember and celebrate the Passover has brought great joy! The Scriptures detail that the Passover or *Pesach* (פֶּסַח), a special time of appointment and remembrance, is to be observed forever in perpetuity. It is to be something that children ask their parents about for critical spiritual and life lessons:

“For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to come in to your houses to smite *you*. **And you shall observe this event as an ordinance for you and your children forever** [*l'choq-lekha u'l'baneykha ad-olam*, לְחֻקְלֶךָ וּלְבָנֶיךָ עַד־עוֹלָם, When you enter the land which the LORD will give you, as He has promised, you shall observe this rite. **And when your children say to you, “What does this rite mean to you?” you shall say, “It is a Passover sacrifice to the LORD who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, but spared**

our homes.” And the people bowed low and worshiped” (Exodus 12:23-27).

When the *moedim* (מוֹעֲדִים) are listed for the first time in Leviticus 23, detailing the appointed times when the Lord will meet with His people, after the weekly Sabbath is recognized, the specifics for the Passover and Festival of Unleavened Bread are articulated. It includes the admonition to remember the days as a perpetual statute:

“These are the appointed times of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at the times appointed for them. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight is the LORD’s Passover. Then on the fifteenth day of the same month there is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work. But for seven days you shall present an offering by fire to the LORD. On the seventh day is a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work.’ Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, “When you enter the land which I am going to give to you and reap its harvest, then you shall bring in the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest. He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD for you to be accepted; on the day after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. Now on the day when you wave the sheaf, you shall offer a male lamb one year old without defect for a burnt offering to the LORD. Its grain offering shall then be two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering by fire to the LORD for a soothing aroma, with its drink offering, a fourth of a hin of wine. Until this same day, until you have brought in the offering of your God, you shall eat neither bread nor roasted grain nor new growth. It is to be a perpetual statute [*chuqat olam*, חֻקַּת עוֹלָם] throughout your generations in all your dwelling places”’ (Leviticus 23:4-14).

The Lord instructed Ancient Israel, “This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live” (NIV), not indicating that remembering Passover and Unleavened Bread were to only be temporary observances (cf. Leviticus 23:21, 31, 41). *They have important things to teach us about the plan of redemption* (Colossians 2:17). Despite various alterations in celebration that have occurred down through the centuries, either by the Jewish Synagogue adding many dogmas that can take one’s attention away from the basic remembrance of the Passover and Exodus, or by the Christian Church which has largely ignored it altogether¹—I would say that it is **not principally a matter of why, or even when, one remembers these commands**. Instead, the challenge for modern-day Messianic Believers scattered abroad is often *how* we honor these commands in a way that is pleasing to the Holy One of Israel. How do we recall the substance of what they teach us about God’s plan of deliverance?

Setting aside the somewhat frivolous discussions (often leading to contentious debates) about the calendar that have surfaced in recent years—by those who self-righteously attempt to usurp the authority bestowed upon the Jewish

¹ This is not to say that all Christians have ignored the significance of the Passover and Exodus. Even while clouded in non-Biblical traditions surrounding “Easter,” the Great Vigil of Easter practiced in many Anglican and Episcopal churches on the Saturday night before Easter Sunday directly connects the resurrection of Yeshua to the symbolism and deliverance of the Exodus (*The Book of Common Prayer* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1990], pp 285-287).

people in this area (Matthew 23:2-3; Romans 3:2; 11:29), who have been faithfully observing these appointed times for millennia—we **still have to answer the question of how Passover is to be celebrated**. Not only are we remembering Passover on the other side of the Exodus and Golgotha, but most of us live in a Twenty-First Century Western environment. If not raised in the Jewish Synagogue, we may have to overcome various prejudices and social hurdles during this time of year.

Some might refer to this annual dilemma as a *Passover paradox*, because of all the controversy that tends to bubble to the surface, especially as the independent Messianic community struggles for identity and cohesion. Our ministry simply considers it to be a manifestation of how the Messianic community has developed (positively *or* negatively) as each congregation, fellowship, or even observant family essentially does “its own thing” based on whatever the leadership decides is appropriate. Some of the decisions people have made are very wise, and they have helped people grow spiritually and understand the important themes of both Passover and Yeshua’s offering as the Lamb of God. Yet, some of the other decisions people have made are very poor, and they have made this season into one where God’s people often divide over minor details, forgetting the larger aspects that are to unite us. (And even if the details on Passover and Unleavened Bread are largely agreed upon, there is still the issue of how to treat our Christian brethren who just observe Easter Sunday.) **How do we learn to look at the bigger picture this time of year?**²

Disciple and Love

What has prompted me to write this—utilizing the annual Passover paradox as a framework for discussion—is somewhat of a reaction to the larger cultural battles we are all currently witnessing in the world where we live. Two age-old challenges to (1) make disciples of Yeshua and (2) love one another, have dominated my thoughts. In order to win the war for our culture, individual lives must be won and redeemed one heart at a time. Yeshua’s departing command to His followers was to go forth and make disciples of those who believed in Him, instructing them in His teachings and the example that He left to emulate:

“And Yeshua came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age’” (Matthew 28:18-20; cf. Acts 1:8).

At Yeshua’s Last Sedar meal, Yeshua commanded His Disciples to love one another—something that should certainly be second nature to any of us who are regenerated by the Holy Spirit! We often find, though, that loving others is a “new” commandment because it too frequently goes *unused*:

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. **By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another**” (John 13:34-35; cf. Leviticus 19:18).

² For further reference, consult the *Messianic Spring Holiday Helper* available from TNN Press.

Lamentably, a lack of love for one another often seems to manifest itself every year around Passover in various sectors of the broad Messianic community. *Among those who claim to be disciples of the Messiah Yeshua, this is very disturbing!* Is something missing among us? Is this not a time when we are to testify via our actions and remembrance of the Passover that we truly love a God who delivered Ancient Israel—and who also loved us by sending His Son to die for us (John 3:16)?

The fact that Yeshua's followers will be known via their love for one another should be a positive testimony to the world that there is something distinctively different about us. It should be an obvious sign that the Spirit of God is indeed working within those who call themselves disciples of Yeshua or Messianic Believers, whether they be Jewish or not. The message of Passover and the Exodus is something that while having affected Ancient Israel, is a powerful theme that various religious and political movements have appropriated for centuries (even without considering the prophetic message of Yeshua's sacrifice as Passover Lamb).³ **It is not something exclusive**, because it is a universal message of release from oppression. We should not be using this season as a time to divide, but rather unite. The Apostle Paul recognized this in his writing to the Corinthians, telling a broad audience of Jewish and non-Jewish Believers,

“For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and all ate the same spiritual food; and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Messiah” (1 Corinthians 10:1-4).

Paul says *hoi pateres hēmōn pantes* (οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν πάντες), “all our ancestors,” participated in the Passover and Exodus. This is true whether one knows his Jewish ancestors were present in Egypt, or whether one becomes a part of Israel via faith in Messiah Yeshua (Ephesians 3:6). **This is a special season of the year that affects all of us who place our trust in the Holy One of Israel**, and the last thing any of us should be doing is trying to skew the unity in His Son that our Father wants us to be united around (cf. Galatians 3:28).

Remembering Yeshua's instruction to make disciples and love others, how should Messianic Believers approach and observe the celebration of the Passover? Should we not approach our commemoration with an objective of instructing not only those among us, but *also* those who might be drawn to us during this time, because of our testimony of faithful obedience (Deuteronomy 4:6)?

Salt and Light

When I look outward to the lost and perverted generation that is increasingly imposing its will upon the world, rather than inward to some of the petty battles that take place within the confines of the Messianic community, I think about Yeshua's requirement that we be salt and light to all those we encounter:

“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it

³ For a discussion of this, consult Michael Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution* (New York: Daniel Doron, 1979); Christopher J.H. Wright, “God's Model of Redemption,” in *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), pp 265-323.

be made salty *again*? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does *anyone* light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. **Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven**" (Matthew 5:13-16).

How do we let our light shine before others? *We properly follow God's Torah* (Matthew 5:17-19) *as Yeshua did!* Followers of the Holy One of Israel have the paramount responsibility to be salt and light to the world, being required to share the hope of salvation that is within us (1 Peter 3:15). How are today's Messianic Believers going to make a sizeable impact on our contemporary culture unless we allow God to use each of us in His work to share the good news? *This primarily takes place by others witnessing our obedience to Him.* And the gospel being witnessed is by no means a "New Testament" concept, exclusively. Isaiah understood the need to share the good message of salvation coming forth from Zion:

"Therefore My people shall know My name; therefore in that day I am the one who is speaking, "Here I am." How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace and brings good news of happiness, **who announces salvation, and says to Zion, 'Your God reigns!'**" (Isaiah 52:6-7).

The Apostle Paul appropriates Isaiah's message in his treatise to the Romans, not only detailing how the good news is for all people, but more specifically how non-Jewish Believers are to provoke the Jewish people at large—who do not know Messiah Yeshua—to jealousy for faith in Him:

"For the Scripture says, 'WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED' [Isaiah 28:16]. For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same *Lord* is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; for 'WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED' [Joel 2:32]. **How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, 'HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!'** [Isaiah 52:7]. However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, 'LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?' [Isaiah 53:1]. So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Messiah. But I say, surely they have never heard, have they? Indeed they have; 'THEIR VOICE HAS GONE OUT INTO ALL THE EARTH, AND THEIR WORDS TO THE ENDS OF THE WORLD' [Psalm 19:4]. But I say, surely Israel did not know, did they? First Moses says, 'I WILL MAKE YOU JEALOUS BY THAT WHICH IS NOT A NATION, BY A NATION WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING WILL I ANGER YOU' [Deuteronomy 32:21]. And Isaiah is very bold and says, 'I WAS FOUND BY THOSE WHO DID NOT SEEK ME, I BECAME MANIFEST TO THOSE WHO DID NOT ASK FOR ME' [Isaiah 65:1]. But as for Israel He says, 'ALL THE DAY LONG I HAVE STRETCHED OUT MY HANDS TO A DISOBEDIENT AND OBSTINATE PEOPLE' [Isaiah 65:2]" (Romans 10:11-12).

Paul instructs the non-Jewish Believers in Rome that one of the reasons salvation has come to them is "to make Israel jealous" (Romans 11:11, RSV). Our

family has been convicted for quite some time that an excellent way non-Jewish Believers can fulfill this mandate is by following God's Torah *and certainly* by celebrating the Passover! If more non-Jewish Believers would take hold of their spiritual inheritance of Israel, faithfully observing the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread, do you think we would make a difference? *What kind of a testimony would we have to the Jewish community?*

Obviously, we commemorate Passover because "Messiah, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed" (1 Corinthians 5:7, ESV). Many of the Jewish traditions associated with the Passover meal eloquently give substance to us understanding the greater fullness of Yeshua's Last Supper. If you are a non-Jewish Believer, can you imagine the positive witness you could have to Jewish people—who do not know Messiah Yeshua—by observing Passover along with them every year? Furthermore, for a Christian community that desires to know more about why Jesus had to come and die for them, what does celebrating Passover communicate to them? When you can put aside ancient, ungodly prejudices that have divided God's people for far too long, can you really recognize the power that comes by sitting down at the *sedar* table?

Being "salty" Believers in the Messiah Yeshua, sharing His salvation, is what is expected for His followers. Salt was often used as an ancient preservative, and remembering Passover each year helps us to persevere in faith, as we are reminded of God's great acts of salvation. We can also be reminded of how we are to use the wisdom God has granted us to bring His truth into various situations, most especially during this season as we commemorate the Exodus and the sacrifice and resurrection of God's Son. The Apostle Paul instructed the Colossians,

"Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with *an attitude of* thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Messiah, for which I have also been imprisoned; that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak. **Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person**" (Colossians 4:2-6).

Passover Sedars

Over the years, we have met scores of people who have a testimony of coming into the Messianic movement as a *direct result* of attending some kind of Passover *sedar*. When one's eyes are opened to the richness of our Hebraic Roots via the Passover, and how they illuminate our understanding of Yeshua's ministry, it is not difficult to see how additional questions and inquiries lead one into a pursuit of Messianic things. Once someone is confronted with the basic truth that the appointed times are to be celebrated forever—as an instructional witness to posterity—Believers often wonder why today's Christianity seldom speaks about them. This prompts many to dig a little deeper into the Hebraic and Jewish roots of their faith. If they are truly seekers of the Most High, we have witnessed that a voracious appetite for more understanding is often initiated, and within a short time such people will often leave their Church settings and join a Messianic congregation.⁴

On the other hand, we have witnessed Messianic assemblies that unfairly restrict the attendance to their Passover *sedars* under the influence of believing that only circumcised men can be in the audience. While it is true that originally within Ancient Israel only the physically circumcised could participate in the Passover (Exodus 12:47-49), it is also true that it is impossible for anyone today to follow all of the instructions of Passover down to the letter. There is no Temple in Jerusalem where one can offer the prescribed sacrifices, and most people—including Jews—who remember Passover are remembering it in some kind of a Diaspora setting where a creative *halachah* has had to be enacted, compensating for the different circumstances. *At best, all any of us can do is observe a Passover memorial.* And certainly with the sacrifice and resurrection of Yeshua to consider, Messianic remembrance of Passover will have more to consider than just the Exodus from Egypt.⁵

Passover is the best time of the year for you to reach out to others and testify of your Messianic walk of faith. Your family needs to have a home *sedar* meal where you can invite your extended family and close friends to participate. A hands on experience of breaking *matzah*, eating bitter herbs, and drinking the cups of wine will focus both your and their attention on what these things mean to us as people of faith. Within the intimacy of your home, each person at the *sedar* table will learn something new. People will be refamiliarized with the deliverance of Ancient Israel at the Exodus, and they will have more to consider regarding Yeshua's sacrifice for their sins.

Yet we know Passover should not only be remembered by individuals or individual families. The corporate setting of a congregational *sedar* meal gives all within the assembly the opportunity to invite and include friends, relatives, seekers, or others to be presented to the celebration and message of the Passover. This is an opportune time for your associates to discover that you believe that Yeshua is the Messiah and that He is the Passover Lamb, as depicted via the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. **Passover is *the* time of year when Messianic congregations receive the largest number of visitors and new members.** Do not let this opportunity go to waste!

Passover is a very special time when we get to flex our spiritual muscles and be diligent in making disciples of Messiah Yeshua. We have the privilege of displaying His love for one another, demonstrating that we have been supernaturally changed. We most especially have the opportunity to testify of Messiah Yeshua to the Jewish community, even if all we do is purchase *matzah* and various other Kosher for Passover items—wishing a Jewish merchant, or a Jewish person in line at the supermarket, a blessed Passover. And if you are non-Jewish, by having a traditional *sedar* meal in your home, you may even force a Messianic Jew (currently wondering why so many non-Jewish Believers are being led into Messianic things), to possibly reconsider his approach toward those others who are his fellow citizens within the Commonwealth of Israel (Ephesians 2:11-12).

Are you starting to see the benefits? You can actually turn the Passover para-

⁴ For our family's testimony of becoming Messianic, consult the Introduction section of *Hebraic Roots: An Introductory Study*.

⁵ The issue of circumcision is addressed more fully in the article "Is Circumcision for Everyone?" by J.K. McKee.

dox—where God’s people have often been divided and do not know what to do—into a Passover outreach. This Passover outreach will serve as a positive testimony to not only your congregational members, but also those who are invited to the celebration. You will have a great opportunity to be salt and light to those in attendance. You might just have the privilege of leading some of the lost to the reality that Yeshua was sacrificed for their sins and resurrected from the dead.

The benefits of using the season of Passover as an outreach toward others far outweigh the possible negatives. People exposed to this annual activity will have an entirely new understanding of what this season means for those who have experienced the deliverance available in the Messiah of Israel. Not only will they understand more clearly the availability of deliverance from the clutches of sin, but they will be presented with the eternal solution that is only found in Him. Being reminded every year of Yeshua’s prophetic fulfillment as Passover Lamb, the sinless unleavened Bread of Life, and the firstfruits of those resurrected—can instruct God’s people more and more about His ongoing plan of salvation history, as this season conveys timeless messages that need not be forgotten any more.

Be encouraged in your making Passover an opportunity for outreach to those beyond the walls of your congregation or fellowship. Give those with whom you assemble the privilege of exercising love for one another, which will confirm to those in the wider world that you are loving disciples of the Messiah. Be a blessing to others! Our constant prayer should be that as we look ahead to the years before us, the Spring festivals of the Lord will be met with great joy and anticipation as the work of His Kingdom continues in our midst. Let us always take advantage of the opportunities that we have during this special season!

SAYINGS OF THE FATHERS

A Messianic Perspective on Pirkei Avot

Sayings of the Fathers: A Messianic Perspective on Pirkei Avot takes readers through not just one, but two years of fifty-day reflections—and six bonus days—of some of the ancient wisdom seen in this valuable text. You will not only be introduced to some of the key views

present in the Apostolic period, but also be able to weigh the value that the Jewish Sages have in your own personal study and reflection

upon the Scriptures. Be prepared to join into an ancient discussion that spans the ages as you reflect on these words. Be blessed as your faith and outlook on the world are enriched, and you have more to take to your Heavenly Father in prayer!



Anxious Hearts

by Mark Huey

In recent weeks, just listening to the radio news, catching a cable television broadcast, walking by a newspaper stand, or glancing at a magazine rack, can generate subliminal apprehension. Unanticipated emotional flashes generated by spoken or written words like: financial meltdown, home foreclosure, unemployment, depression, recession, lost savings, equity reduction, or—*fill in the blank*—have many Americans in a psychosomatic freefall.



The mental and physical stress is taking its escalating toll, especially if one's perceived security is attributed *exclusively* to either financial assets or the ability to generate resources by one's own strength.

While this turmoil is creating personal angst for millions seeking the American financial dream that, for many, is currently morphing from a mirage to a nightmare—the occasions to share the Ultimate Answer for heartfelt peace are intensifying. For Believers who know the salvation available in Yeshua, who are diligently pursuing righteousness, the opportunities to present *the only* Solution to these excruciating concerns are on the rise. The Prophet Daniel foresaw a time when “those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever” (Daniel 12:3). Are you one of those who will have insight?

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Is the current economic debacle and the attendant anxiety it is producing a time to lead many to righteousness?
- Is this a time when God's people will have the insight to provide answers to those asking life's greatest questions, being instigated by the economic and political crisis?
- What is required for God's people to shine brightly like the stars, when some might seek us out for the answers?

Do remember, as is often quoted today by those who understand individual and corporate human nature, how to influence and control people and nations:

“You never want a serious crisis to go to waste...this crisis (global financial trauma) provides the opportunity for us to do things that you could not do before.”

While those in positions of power might want to exploit the economic crisis for their own political gains, let me suggest that there is an even greater opportunity for the faithful to share the gospel with those who are in a personal or corporate crisis. Think about those inimitable spiritual stratagems, concocted perhaps by the Holy Spirit as a “crisis” for probing the hardened heart, or knocking on the door of the heart, as if wanting to come in and dine (Revelation 3:20).

Typically, there are three problem areas in someone's life that are often used by the Lord to get a person to start asking meaningful questions. These can be: (1) financial problems, (2) physical problems, or (3) relational problems. In many cases, financial problems actually precipitate physical problems, as the stress and

strain of debt, loss of security, or lack of money often attack weakened body parts. Additionally, marriage counselors almost universally agree that the most significant problem that contributes to separation and/or divorce (the ultimate relational problem) is financial challenges. So for those sensitive to sharing the gospel to their family members, friends, neighbors, co-workers, or acquaintances, the current financial crisis and the attendant anxiety leading to substantial personal and relational problems is likely to create multiple opportunities to share your faith. (But do be prepared for multi-faceted circumstances to manifest themselves with those to whom you are led to speak.)

One of the keys to being effective in sharing your faith in the Messiah Yeshua is developing and actually possessing the insight of which Daniel speaks. Interestingly, when one searches the Scriptures to discern what is required or needed to have insight leading to righteousness, Psalm 119 comes into focus. Consider the benefits of examining God's Torah and following His commandments, as you will be better able to understand His holiness and righteousness:

"O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever mine. I have more insight than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the aged, because I have observed Your precepts. I have restrained my feet from every evil way, that I may keep Your word. I have not turned aside from Your ordinances, for You Yourself have taught me. How sweet are Your words to my taste! *Yes, sweeter* than honey to my mouth! From Your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way" (Psalm 119:97-104).

If there were ever a passage of Scripture that encourages disciples of the Lord to observe His ways—this is it! Those who follow these instructions will shine like the stars and be used to lead many to not only the Lord, but also encourage them to study His Word and learn to live like Him. In your presentation of the good news, you might even be able to weave in the following Scriptures, especially for those who might be anxious about their financial predicament. Yeshua taught,

"Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. **But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.** So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matthew 6:31-34).

Finally, as you take this great opportunity to lead people to the Messiah through whatever this current financial situation brings, you might also be able to share another passage that addresses the prayerful prescription that Believers use for dealing with anxious hearts. Paul wrote the Philippians,

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentle *spirit* be known to all men. The Lord is near. **Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Messiah Yeshua.** Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely,

whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things" (Philippians 4:4-8).

Brothers and sisters, rejoice in the opportunities as they come your way! Be prayerful and beseech the Lord for wisdom and insight to deal with the challenges as they manifest. Make your requests known to God, particularly if you are discerning that He is using some of these predicaments to get the attention of those in your circle of influence. It is a great privilege to watch this current financial crisis, and be used by the Almighty to bring many to salvation—because of your testimony and willingness to direct many to the accomplished work of the Messiah! Never forget this admonition to the wise and insightful who are sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit:

"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who is wise wins souls" (Proverbs 11:30).

May the fruit of your faithfulness lead many anxious hearts to the Righteous One, our Messiah Yeshua! Never let a crisis go to waste, until the restoration of all things...

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Passover, Traditional Sedar Meal: Where did the traditions from the *sedar* meal employed during Passover come from?

FAQ???

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Obviously, the Torah itself issues some specific commands concerning the observance of the Passover. There were some specific commandments relating to the first Passover, the deliverance from Egypt, which included slaughtering a lamb and spreading its blood upon the doorposts of the house, and eating the meal in haste, as the Ancient Israelites were preparing to leave (Exodus 12). Passover or *Pesach* (פסח) is codified as one of the appointed times in Leviticus 23, and regulations on how to observe it in the Promised Land are detailed in Numbers 9.

Between the first Passover in Egypt to the Passovers kept in the Land of Israel, coupled with the division and dispersion of Israel, and later with a vast Diaspora Jewish community by the time of Yeshua, the celebration of Passover developed substantially. By the time of Yeshua, the specific order of service for Passover became codified in the Haggadah of Passover, first referred to in the Mishnah. This was focused around a midrashic interpretation of Deuteronomy 26:5-9, which allowed for one to recline and remember the mighty deeds God performed before the Egyptians in delivering Israel:

“You shall answer and say before the LORD your God, ‘My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down to Egypt and sojourned there, few in number; but there he became a great, mighty and populous nation. And the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, and imposed hard labor on us. Then we cried to the LORD, the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction and our toil and our oppression; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with great terror and with signs and wonders; and He has brought us to this place and has given us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.”

We see elements of the traditional Jewish Passover of the First Century included in Yeshua’s Last Supper, and some slight deviations. The *Dictionary of Judaism in the Biblical Period* summarizes the central elements of Passover contained in the Haggadah:

“The ritual found in the Haggadah is first referred to in M. Pesahim, chapter 10, which describes a festival meal marked by a set order of foods and a required liturgy (*sedar*). At the heart of the meal is an explanation of the significance of three foods (unleavened bread, bitter herbs, and the pass-over offering) and the recitation of the Hallel-psalms. In early Amoraic times, this basic ceremony was embellished through the addition of a discussion of Israelite history, leading up to and including captivity in Egypt. In later developments, continuing to the present, liturgical poems and other homilies

have been added to the basic format set in talmudic times” (pp 266-267).

Today, we obviously see a wide variation of Passover customs and traditions present in the Jewish community and in Messianic Judaism. There are significant variations between Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews, as well as between Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform (or Progressive) Judaism. The Passover *haggadah* (הַגְּדָה) is something that has been adapted and changed by each denomination of Judaism, as some *haggadahs* include an all-night service, where one stays awake and focuses on certain Scriptures, to those that are only focused around a meal at one’s home with family and close friends. There are traditions present in Passover today that are unique to the lands where the Jewish people have been scattered. Messianic Judaism has adapted many of these traditions to form its own Passover *haggadahs*, which demonstrate how we are to rejoice in God delivering Israel from Egypt, and Yeshua delivering us from the bondage of sin.

Passover, Egg on Sedar Plate: Why do Jews have an egg on their *sedar* plates? Does this not come from Easter?

The egg on the *sedar* plate at Passover is a post-Second Temple Rabbinical addition. The roasted egg or *beitzah* in most Jewish traditions symbolizes the hardness of Pharaoh’s heart. We would speculate that after the destruction of the Temple and the Dispersion of the Jewish people from the Land of Israel, new traditions were added to Passover to compensate for the loss of no longer observing it in the appointed place. New debates likely arose as Jews were spread abroad into many places where they had never lived before. As additions to the *sedar* arose, eggs were probably an item that all Jewish communities could agree were “kosher for Passover,” and the custom of having a roasted egg on the *sedar* plate was instituted.

The inclusion of eggs at Easter time is a debated practice in Christianity. No one is entirely certain how they came about, but it is likely that they stem from some kind of Babylonian fertility rite. However, we do not stop eating eggs simply because pagans used them in their worship. Similarly, because the Jewish community employs an egg on the *sedar* plate during Passover, we cannot all of a sudden make the judgment that they borrowed it “from Easter.” There is always an alternative view that frequently eludes those who are out on an “egg witch hunt.”

**Stay tuned for:
Virtual Passover 2009
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KOSHER YOUR PLATE

for Passover

Baked Passover Lamb

5 pound boned leg of lamb

Garlic salt & pepper

Prepare a boned Leg of Lamb for cooking by soaking it in salt water so that all the blood is drained out. Cut off the fat. Rub garlic salt and pepper on the meat to your taste. Place the lamb on a rack in a shallow roasting pan to keep it out of the drippings. Roast at 350 degrees about 2 – 2 ½ hours, or until a meat thermometer reads between 160-170 degrees. Let the roast set for 15 minutes covered. Carve and serve!

Charoset

4 tart apples, cored and grated

1 ½ cups chopped pecans or walnuts

3 tablespoons granulated sugar

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

½ teaspoon ground ginger

1 ½ teaspoons grated lemon rind

3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

Passover Red Wine

Combine all ingredients and blend with enough wine to give a spreading consistency. Makes 8-10 servings.

Meringue Cookies

3 egg whites

1 cup granulated sugar

¼ teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

¾ cup chopped pecans

Mix egg whites, sugar, salt and vanilla into top of a double boiler. Place over boiling water and beat with a electric hand mixer until the mixture stands in stiff peaks. Scrape the bottom and sides of pan while you mix with a rubber spatula. Stir in nuts. Drop heaping teaspoonfuls of dough on 2 lightly greased baking sheets. Cook one sheet at a time in a preheated 300 degree oven for 12-15 minutes, or until lightly browned. Makes about 3 ½ dozen cookies.



Messianic Spring Holiday Helper

The Spring holiday season lasting from *Purim* to Passover to *Shavuot* is one of the most important times a year for today's Messianic community. Many important themes regarding God's salvation history are emphasized during this season, which often attract the attention of many Christians interested in their Hebraic Roots. To help you and your household prepare for the Spring holidays, the *Messianic Spring Holiday Helper* offers a selection of articles on: *Purim*, Passover, the Festival of Unleavened Bread, and *Shavuot*. Various traditions associated with these festivals and customary Scriptures read during this time are considered—as is the dual emphasis of both the Exodus and Resurrection of Yeshua. Believers have many things to consider during the Spring season that are surely worthy of

commemoration within the framework of our Father's appointed times! Also included are some Passover recipes and a brief *hagaddah* you can use in your home for the *sedar* meal.

\$8.50 plus shipping & handling



Celebrating Passover Today

Passover is a wonderful time of year to talk to others about the Hebraic Roots of our faith, and the richness of Yeshua's sacrifice for us. Many people have questions about Passover regarding its history, significance, and the various traditions that make our celebration joyful. In this audio teaching, Margaret McKee Huey discusses the fullness of Passover from a Messianic perspective, and how important it is for each of us to understand.

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