March 2018 / Adar - Nisan 5778 Volume 15 • Issue 1 • INTERNATIONAL EDITION





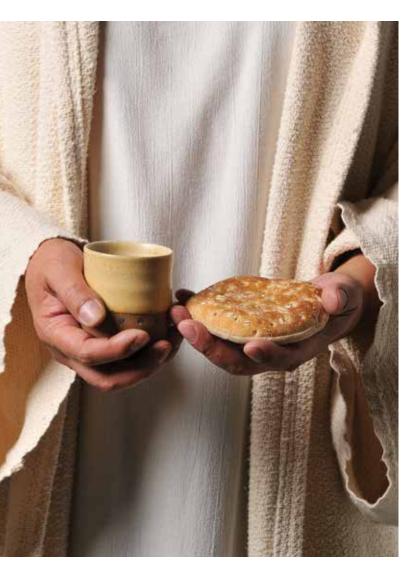
WAS THE LAST SUPPER A PASSOVER SEDER?

Dr. Mitch Glaser International Director Chosen People Ministries



ear friends,
We are approaching the Passover/Easter season, and I pray this will be a spiritually enriching time for you and your family. Hundreds of Jewish people — both believers in Jesus and seekers — will be attending Chosen People Ministries' Passover events around the globe. Please remember to pray for these outreaches, as many Jewish people will be introduced to the Lamb of God for the first time in a very "Jewish way!"

Your Mission to the Jewish People has produced two new books, which are now available. Both books cover similar material, but the longer book, *Messiah in the Passover*, goes into greater depth regarding Passover in the Bible, Jewish history, and even Church history. *The Gospel in the Passover* focuses on the way in which Jesus fulfills the festival.



Passover and the Gospel of John

My chapter in *Messiah in the Passover* focuses on the Gospel of John, and so, based on that wonderful Gospel, I will try to answer this question: "Was the Last Supper a Passover Seder?" The following is a small portion of the chapter.

The Gospel of John is critical to understanding the Jewish story of Jesus. Many scholars argue that the Gospel of John was primarily written to Gentiles, perhaps because of its A.D. 90 date of authorship as well as for a variety of textual reasons. However, the Gospel of John really should be viewed through a Jewish lens. John himself was Jewish and one of the earliest disciples of Jesus. Traditionally, and without argument, he is thought to be the author of the Gospel that bears his name, the Epistles (First, Second and Third John), and the Book of Revelation. According to early Church tradition, John lived longer than any of the other apostles and died as an exile in the late first century on the island of Patmos.

John's first-hand experience with Jesus gives him great insight into the details of Jesus' life. He traveled with the Messiah, heard His sermons, and was perhaps the one who was described as "beloved." He was present at the foot of the cross, unlike his peers, and was given the task of caring for Miriam (Mary), the mother of Yeshua (John 19:26-27).

He was present with Jesus at every Jewish festival the Savior celebrated. Perhaps this is why we learn some unique aspects of the last Passover supper of Jesus through John — especially from the teaching of the Savior during that meal, generally referred to as the Upper Room Discourse.

John mentions Passover quite often in his Gospel. In his very first mention of Jesus, John refers to Him as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). We may assume that his hearers would have understood this comment in light of the Passover.

John describes three different Passovers observed by Jesus: John 2:13, 6:4, and the final Passover, the focus of this chapter, found in John 11:55, 12:1, and 13:1, with additional references in John 18:28 and 19:14. It should also be noted that Luke tells us that John was asked by Jesus to make preparations for this final Passover meal (Luke 22: 8-13).

The Foot Washing

We understand that the Seder observed by Jesus and His disciples would have been more primitive and not as well developed as what was described 200 years later in the Mishnaic tractate, *Pesachim*, ¹ or found in the modern *Haggadah*, the guide to our modern Passover Seder. However, some of the traditions recorded by John run parallel to our modern day Passover Seder

and cause us to think that, in fact, Jesus observed a similar Passover to what we know today and what I was raised celebrating each year! As most of us know, Jesus washed His disciples' feet during the Last Supper.

The Washing of Hands During the Passover Seder is Foundational to Foot Washing

The modern *Haggadah* calls upon participants to wash their hands twice for the sake of establishing ritual purity.

The first ritual hand washing is called, in Hebrew, *Urchatz*.² In this instance, water is poured from a cup, once over each hand and recited without a blessing in preparation for taking the greens, either parsley or lettuce, which is part of the traditional Seder meal.

The second hand washing is called *Rachtzah* ³ and it is done a little later in the Passover service just prior to eating the matzah (unleavened bread). This time, a blessing is said when pouring the water over the hands: "Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His laws and commanded us to wash our hands."

These washing traditions harken back to those linked to ritual purity found in the Torah and in particular to various commandments associated with the priesthood and Temple offerings, especially the preparation of the priests for their duties. ⁴

Again, our modern Passover Seder rituals developed over centuries and cannot be simply "read into" the Passover Seder of Jesus. In this instance, however, it appears that the washing of the disciples' feet should be associated with the liturgy of the Last Supper (or Last Seder) rather than the common washing of feet when entering a house as a guest.

The strongest indication is that the disciples are already sitting at the table and engaged with dinner when the foot washing begins. ⁵

Jesus decided to use His washing the disciples' feet rather than their hands to teach the disciples some early lessons about true humility, suggesting that true spirituality is not simply a matter of performing rituals correctly but a matter of the heart. The lessons in humility demonstrated and then taught through changing the hand washing into a foot washing is dramatic and powerful.

So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. (John 13:12-17)

There are many rabbinic teachings found in the Mishnah and Talmud that emphasize the importance of humility. ⁶ We find similar thoughts about humility in the words of Jesus Himself spoken during the Sermon on the Mount, especially as gleaned from the first three beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-5).

Reclining at the Table

Once again, we have good evidence that this meal is a Seder as Dr. Don Carson, in his commentary on the Gospel of John, suggests that the "reclining" posture of the disciples during the meal is another hint that the meal was a Passover Seder: "In short, the posture of Jesus and his men is a small indicator that they were in fact eating the Passover meal." ⁷

The reclining posture of the disciples and Jesus indicates that the meal was a "special meal" and in this instance, because of the other elements mentioned and the date it took place, it may be seen as a Passover Seder.

The Sop and the Betrayal

Another key to understanding this meal as the *Last Seder* of Jesus comes when Jesus indicates to His disciples that Judas is going to betray Him. In response to Peter's asking who the perpetrator will be, Jesus responds, '"That is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him.' So when He had dipped the morsel, He took and gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot" (John 13:26).

The dipping of the "morsel" likely refers to one of the various "dippings" that are part of the Seder. It could refer to the dipping of the greens (parsley or lettuce), the bitter herbs, or the *charoset* (the sweet mixture of apples, nuts, and honey used to symbolize the sweetness of redemption in the midst of the bitterness of slavery represented by the other dippings). We might not know which dipping Jesus is referring to exactly, but clearly this is an unusual action for a regular meal, but not for a Passover Seder.

There are many other reasons why we believe that the dinner recorded by John was an early version of a Passover Seder, but perhaps the above will suffice for now and give you a hunger to learn more about the Passover and the ways Jesus, the Lamb of God, fulfills the Feast.

Enjoy the rest of the newsletter and remember to pray for our staff serving in 17 countries around the globe as they present the Messiah through the Passover in churches, homes, and Messianic congregations and speaking one-on-one with Jewish people who need to know the Lord.

Thanks for you prayers and generous support of our ministry. Happy Passover and may the power of His resurrection give you strength to serve Him faithfully!

Your brother,

Mitch

¹ The tractate of the Mishnah about Passover

² Literally, washing or cleansing

³ Literally, To wash or bath

⁴ Leviticus 8:6, Leviticus 16:24-25

⁵ Craig S Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary.* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003), 906.

⁵ Ibid. 906–907

⁷ Carson, D. A. The Gospel According to John. (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press: W.B. Ferdmans, 1991). p. 473.

As we look forward to seeing what the Lord will do this year I was reflecting on last year's highlights, one of which was praying with a Christian lady in the Ukraine who told us that we were the answer to her prayers. She has been

FIONA SORBALA REPORTS

praying for Jewish people for over 30 years. She said her mother had taught her to love Jewish people. She recounted how

her mother had helped some Jewish children during the war. She didn't realise that she herself was Jewish until I told her that if her mother was Jewish then so was she. Communism had robbed her of her identity.

The most thrilling event though was hearing two of our Latvian believers give interviews for a Christian radio after our Feast of Tabernacles conference in Finland. One shared how during one of my talks the Lord had for the first time put truth in his spirit, and the other declared his belief that one day all the Jewish people would come to know Jesus. We followed them up at Chanukkah with a visit to Latvia and we rejoiced as we watched them both enjoy the worship at a service we held there. We also made contact with a local pastor who shares our vision to see Jewish people come to know the Messiah and who wants to partner with us.

I wondered what this year would bring, and the Lord did a wonderful thing in the life of a Jewish man who had been attending the congregation here in London. He originally came



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SIMON LISSAK WRITES

don't know how you feel about being out of your depth, but as a child the film "Jaws" made a lasting impression on me and I generally feel safer when I can see beneath the "surface" of any given situation.

Yet this is not the life Jesus has called us to, and in a recent theology lecture I was challenged by the statement that "human beings by nature want to be dependent on anything other than God". I realised how much this applied to me.

Three short examples may illustrate: On Holocaust Memorial Day I publicly

interviewed Herman Rothman, a Holocaust survivor who escaped Berlin on the Kindertransport and played a key role in the discovery of Hitler's will. How could I present a Gospel message in this context? Yet as we talked I felt the LORD was with me, guiding me and making it possible

am excited to be a part of the Chosen People Ministries UK team. These last couple of months have been a whirlwind as I left my job at Alpha and then helped to raise £27K to take 40 young adults on a tour to Israel, which was incredibly inspiring. I then helped to serve with CPM in Israel, which was

amazing! On returning to England I was asked to help with the Balfour 100 anniversary next generation declaration, which I ended up reading out on stage at the Royal Albert Hall - what a privilege!

As I embark on this new role, my hope is to see many Jewish people in the U.K. have a more accurate understanding about the Jewishness of Jesus and for them to have a life-changing encounter with their Messiah just as I did. Also to help Christians, especially the younger generation, to better engage with their Jewish friends about Jesus and to develop creative ways for them to understand the

Jewishness of the Bible.

EMILY EMANUEL

SHARES

The two things I feel particularly passionate about in my role at CPM are prayer and education. Prayer is the foundation of

every great move of God in history. We read in the scriptures that the last act that Jesus was doing in the Garden of Gethsemane before he was taken to the cross was praying.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 says, "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." This year at CPM, I plan to lead regular public prayer meetings for the Jewish people in Golders Green - with the intention of inspiring other meetings to start around the country and online.

I also want to help produce short educational video resources for Christians and Jews. It is important that as Christians we are not ignorant of the Jewish context that Jesus ministered in, the countless Old Testament prophecies that he fulfilled and the role of Israel in God's Kingdom and the last days. I also feel passionate about developing resources that paint a clear picture of the Jewish Messiah that Jews are able to relate to.

My heart is to see Romans 11:11-12 unfold, for the hardness of heart to soften, and for salvation of the Jewish people to open up great blessing for the world.

If you would like to support this work by prayer or giving financially, it would make a huge difference!

Lots of love & Shalom — Emily

FIONA CONTINUES

looking to understand what having a Jewish heritage meant. He returned just after the new year and after the service wanted to become born again, so we prayed with him. What a joy to see him and his three boys come to our services.

Life in the congregation is busy as we make plans for Purim and Passover. We hope to baptise our new believer in the next few months, as well as planning for another trip to Latvia. Last Purim we discovered my husband had hidden talents as a clown, and we are looking forward to his presentation this Purim. I will help with the Purim celebration in London, and the following morning I take an early flight to Latvia to help with a Purim celebration we are planning to hold there.

SIMON CONTINUES

for an Orthodox Jewish man and a Messianic Jew to share a stage and together proclaim God's love.

The next day Herman was too tired to repeat our interview, but people came to hear his story! It needed to be told and again I felt out of my depth. But with God's help I was able to tell Herman's story and weave in parts of my own: a shared history which reveals incredible acts of bravery by Gentiles who risked their lives to save Jewish people.

Last was a debate in London between a rabbi, a humanist, a Christian (me) and a Muslim. We were all asked to debate the question: "Should Britain be Religious?" The room filled and we each gave a 10-minute talk. Mine was based on Mark 7 and suggested that "the problem at the heart of religion was the human heart". That was followed with unscripted questions from the audience and further discussion with them and our panel! It was a challenging environment and again I felt out of my depth. Yet from this evening a young Muslim man accepted an invitation to do a Christianity Explored course, I had the opportunity to clearly proclaim the Gospel and I am hoping to find a way to privately meet the rabbi.

So if you are feeling out of your depth, take heart. He may be leading you to achieve immeasurably more than you could hope or imagine. All glory to Him, Simon

BOOK REVIEW

hen we picture the Last Supper, many of us recall Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper." Jesus and His disciples partake of fluffy rolls more characteristic of an Italian-style Sunday afternoon dinner than a first-century Jewish Passover Seder. So, what was different? What was the same? Was the Last Supper a Passover Seder? Messiah in the Passover, edited by Dr. Darrell Bock and Dr. Mitch Glaser, addresses these questions with thorough studies of Passover in the Old and New Testaments.

Messiah in the Passover is a comprehensive volume of the most pertinent information about Jewish tradition, the Gospels, and the Passover from Bible scholars and seasoned Chosen People Ministries' teachers. Messiah in the Passover expands upon themes of promise and fulfillment within a first-century context, which helps the reader to see the New Testament through Jewish eyes and have a deeper knowledge of Jesus and His relationship to His people. Understanding the Jewish background of the New

Testament allows us to better understand the links between Jesus and the Passover. Understanding Jewish life, culture, and history across the millennia is layered and multi-faceted. Like a tapestry, each individual thread connects, and the reader can't tug on one without pulling on the other.

Each year, Christians honor Holy Week and Jesus' death and resurrection, while Jewish people remember the Exodus out of Egypt. Messiah in the Passover explains how these two observances, separated by time, share the same origin, and how we can better understand Jesus' life and ministry in light of the Passover. Messiah in the Passover also covers the Seder in Jewish tradition and Church history, as well as practical applications for teaching the Passover and having a family Seder in your home. See the back page of this newsletter for information on how to order your copy!

Easter Pentecost Sunday Gregorian March Calendar Feast of Unleav-Leviticus 23 **Feast of First Fruits Feast of Weeks Passover** Yeshua is the Lamb of God who Just as Yeshua rose, so too believers ened Bread The beginning of the Church and Fulfillment in Yeshua takes away the sin of the world have a hope of resurrection Salvation through Yeshua makes the the coming of the Holy Spirit Т believer righteous/pure **Biblical Year** Sivan Messiah's Resurrection Counting of the Omer (49 days) Pesach Modern First Sunday after Unleavened Bread Messianic **Unleavened Bread** Shavuot **Jewish Holiday** Religious New Year (starts 1 Nisan)

See the Bible Through Jewish Eyes ■ BIBLE STUDY WITH DR. RICH FREEMAN



Dr. Rich Freeman, D. Min. serves as the Vice President for Church Ministries and Conferences with Chosen People Ministries and lives in South Florida with his wife. Julia.

HEBREWS 10:1-18 A Concluding Argument

Hebrews 10:1, 9-12, 18 NASB

¹The Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come...[can never] make perfect those who draw near. ⁹...He takes away the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰ By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. ¹¹ Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; ¹² but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, ... ¹⁸ Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin.

his study begins with the writer L of Hebrews concluding his argument on the superiority of the priesthood of Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah that began in chapter seven. He states in 10:1 that the Mosaic Law by its very nature could never accomplish what Messiah's sacrifice accomplished, that is, making the believer acceptable to God. First, he says the Law was "a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things." The Greek word skia, translated "shadow," refers to the unreality of an object as contrasted with the reality. It is used to describe a rough sketch or outline as opposed to the final product. The Levitical sacrificial system was a type or rough sketch of the finished work Messiah would accomplish on that horrible Roman cross. Since it was only a rough sketch it could never achieve what Messiah accomplished—full access to God by "making perfect those who draw near." The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) was a continual yearly reminder to the Israelites that their sins needed removing so they could continue to have fellowship with God. The writer states in verse four that "it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins." Today, we do not need a yearly reminder of sin because Yeshua's sacrifice has made

us perfect in God's sight. Therefore, Yom Kippur is now a reminder to all who believe in Yeshua's final sacrifice of what He has accomplished for us.

In Hebrews 10:5-10—the next section—the writer applies Psalm 40:6-8 to Yeshua's incarnation with the phrase, "When He comes into the world." The passage he quoted clearly shows Messiah's commitment to offer His body as a sacrifice to God because animal sacrifices of all types were simply not adequate to God. God's will was the sanctification of believers. Yeshua was not a mindless animal that offered its life unwillingly. Yeshua intentionally, consciously, and willingly offered His life in obedience to God's will. Two times in this section, the writer states that God "had taken no pleasure" in the Old Covenant sacrifices. It's important to state that this does not suggest that the old sacrificial system was wrong or that those bringing sacrifices with sincere hearts received no benefit from obeying God's Law. It only means that God had no delight in sacrifices apart from the obedient hearts of the worshipers. No amount of sacrifices could substitute for obedience. And ultimately, the intent of the sacrifices was to point people to the Messiah. Hebrews 10:9 says, "He takes away the first in order to

establish the second." Psalm 40 announced the abolition of the old, inadequate Levitical sacrificial system and in its place established the New Covenant, based on Messiah's greater sacrifice. This was God's will, and it satisfied Him. The writer's view of sanctification in verse ten is positional rather than progressive. God sets aside all believers to Himself as they come to faith in Messiah. That is what is meant when it says, "By this will we have been sanctified."

In Hebrews 10:11-18, these last verses, the writer of Hebrews stresses the finality of Yeshua's offering. The Levitical priests never sat down because their work was never finished, but Yeshua sat down beside His Father because He "offered one sacrifice for sins for all time." His work was done and now He awaits the last days and the destruction of His enemies. Quoting Jeremiah 31:33-34, the writer of Hebrews states in verses 16-17 that the New Covenant believer can say that his sins and iniquities are remembered no more. There is "no longer any offering for sin." This is something the believers under the old Levitical system could never say. This is why Yeshua's sacrifice is superior!



ISRAELI TRAVELER FINDS PEACE AT THE ZULA LODGE, NEW ZEALAND

"Ela* is an Israeli girl that your prayer and support is helping reach with the Gospel," writes staff member, Stephen A. You can tell that her time at the Zula Lodge had an impact on her by what she wrote in the guest book:

Right at the first moment when I arrived at the Zula, I felt at home. Something in me just calmed down. I didn't know yet how this place would soon become a real home for me. This is the first place I felt like this after six months of travels, and this is not just because the Zula facilities are so amazing. It is because of the special family that you are. Thanks for not only opening your house to me and including me in all your daily routines, but more than that, for opening your hearts and really letting me feel that I belong in the most natural and generous way. These days with you were a unique opportunity to learn and get to know a different way to live life in this world... Thanks for making me ask questions and having the patience to answer them too. You are, without a doubt, a big and meaningful part of my trip around the world, and of my life journey.

Stephen continues, "It was such an amazing opportunity for us to talk with Ela more about the Gospel in Isaiah 53 and live out our faith before her eyes."

CONCERTS BRING JOY TO HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

Staff members in Moscow, Kirill and Vera, hosted a series of concerts for Holocaust survivors when they visited Israel. The first one was held at the Jerusalem Messianic Center, and more than fifty Holocaust survivors attended. The second was held in the city of Ofakim, located in southern Israel close to the Gaza Strip. This concert was actually held in a bomb shelter! The room was small and could barely accommodate sixty people. However, Kirill and Vera were very surprised when about 120 people came! The entire hall was packed with standing room only! A third concert took place at the Ramat Gan Messianic Center in greater Tel Aviv. A tour bus brought sixty elderly people from the city of Migdal HaEmek. All three concerts were a great success! These are very open people, ready to hear the Good News of salvation in Yeshua the Messiah. The Lord continues to perform miracles! Today Russian Jews in Israel are the most open Jewish people, and they receive the Good News with grateful hearts.

ORTHODOX FAMILY HEARS ABOUT JESUS

The Bible says in John 4:37, "For in this case the saying is true, 'One sows, and another reaps.'" Staff member Greg S. recently saw this verse in action when he ran into Lydia* at the grocery store. She

recognized Greg because he had done a Messiah in the Passover presentation at her church last spring. She told Grea that the day after he spoke at her church, she was invited to her Orthodox supervisor's Passover Seder. Lydia shared the Gospel truths that she had learned at the Messiah in the Passover presentation. Lydia even had the *chutzpah* (Yiddish for "nerve") to offer the family some evangelistic literature that she had picked up at the presentation. Lydia said, "The family was literally stunned. They were speechless, so they kept on reading the Hebrew liturgy." Please pray for this family, that the Gospel seeds will take root!



Passover Books from our Online Store

Messianic Calendar Sale! This year's calendar celebrates the 70th anniversary of the nation of Israel with pictures taken in Israel by our very own Lawrence Hirsch. Each month will greet you with a breathtaking photo of a

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different aspect of Jewish life, a relevant word of Scripture and an encouraging thought about Messiah's promise to His people. A great opportunity for people to purchase for their friends.

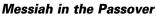
The Gospel in the Passover

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The Chosen People UK Edition newsletter is published bimonthly by Chosen People Ministries (UK). To receive a copy or for more information write to: Chosen People Ministries, PO Box 47871, Golders Green, LONDON, NW11 1AL, call us on 0208 455 7911, or email us at info@chosenpeople.org.uk. Design: Lois Ruedinger.

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