

Pesach Day 1 – Ex. 12:21-51 and Num. 28:16-25

By Moshe Schwab

While Praying

- * God has made us His chosen kings and priests and has given us blessings and refreshing.
- * Be a people of understanding; look into the scriptures as they were intended.
- * God gives us His help and mercy so we can turn our lives around to Him.
- * God pours out His working from heaven

Pesach means “Passover.” In this portion for Pesach, Moshe instructs the people that they should select Pesach lambs, slaughter the lamb, dip hyssop leaves in its blood and put its blood on the door posts and lintels and not go out until morning; this way the slaughterer would pass over them and their first born would not die. They were not to break any of the bones of the lamb. Israel was to retell the story and commemorate what God did for them forever. The people did as Moshe told them and at midnight the first born of the Egyptians died including livestock.

Pharaoh then told Israel to leave, so they took their bread before it could rise, the Egyptians gave them clothing and jewelry, and Israel went and camped at Sukkot. A mixed group (Jews and Gentiles) of 600,000 men went out (about 2 million people); they had been in Canaan and Egypt for 430 years to the day (215 in Canaan and 215 in Egypt). The Septuagint tells us it was both in Canaan and Egypt. So, the later manuscripts lost the word Canaan.

In Numbers it tells us that Pesach was to be observed on the 14th of Nisan toward the evening or the 15th of Nisan. The biblical day starts with the evening. In Genesis it says evening and morning were the first day. So, the Passover meal then would end up concluding on the evening of the 15th of Nisan which is the 1st day of the feast of Unleavened Bread followed by 7 more days of unleavened bread. Pesach is merged with the Feast of unleavened bread for that reason. They are called days of the Passover, but they are actually the 7 days of the feast of Unleavened Bread plus about 2 hours beforehand for the Passover meal. No leaven is to be eaten for seven days and the 1st (15th of Nisan) and 7th days (21st of Nisan) of the feast of Unleavened Bread are days of rest. There is no reason to observe feasts for two days anymore because we can know the exact days of the feasts.

The actual biblical/Jewish month starts when the first crescent of the moon can be seen in Jerusalem. The rabbis now observe set months so the Jewish holidays often do not end up on the correct day. They are sometimes one or two days off from the correct day. Therefore, they don't observe the feasts when they are supposed to and they make a big deal out of celebrating the feasts on their day which is the wrong day!

Pharaoh would not listen to God and would not let Israel go free. The death of the Egyptian's first born is a tragic reminder of what happens when people don't listen to God. Just like Pharaoh reaped the results of his stubbornness, we see the same thing in our society as people reap the destructive results of their poor choices and sinful behavior.

God freed Israel so they could serve Him. Yeshua died for our sins so that we could have victory over sin and live for God. Yeshua was the Lamb of God who died for us at the time of Pesach. He literally died when the Passover lambs were being slaughtered. Yochanan clearly says it was the preparation day for Passover which is before the Passover. "Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day);" John 19:31 NKJV. Just as Israel was to not brake a bone of their Pesach lamb, no bone was broken when Yeshua died for us (John 19:33).

A mixed group of Jews and Gentiles left Egypt so we see Gentiles being assimilated into the Jewish community as they leave Egypt. It was always God's intention to include Gentiles who wanted to be his people. Also, believers in the Messiah include both Jews and Gentiles. They are called Messianic Jews or can also be called Messianic Believers.

The HaftaRAH for the 1st day of Pesach is Josh 3:5-7; 5:2 to 6:1; 6:27. In this HaftaRAH portion, God exalts Joshua, they (Israel) circumcised those who had not been circumcised in the desert and they observed Pesach. The day after Pesach they ate the produce of the land and the manna stopped. Joshua meets the commander of the Lord's army, he tells Joshua to take off his shoes because they were standing on holy ground, and he tells Joshua that he has handed over Jericho to Israel. God was with Israel as they took Jericho.

This should remind us that God is truly our provision. God had provided all Israel needed the entire 40 years while they were in the desert. It was truly an amazing miracle. Also, we see Joshua having an experience like Moshe had when Moshe saw God in the burning bush; Joshua was to take off his shoes because the ground there was holy ground. It is quite possible that the angel that Joshua sees is also God who has come in the form of a man to fight for Israel. We see God fighting for Israel as the walls of Jericho come down miraculously.

In the Brit Chadashah we should remember that Rabbi Shaul commanded that we are to keep Pesach and also be a pure and holy people. The sacrificial lamb of Passover prefigures the Messiah Yeshua giving His life and being our Passover Lamb just before the Passover meal began.

He was the final sacrifice for sin when He gave His life at the time of Pesach (Hebrews 10:8-10). Just as no bone of the Pesach lamb was to be broken, no bone in Yeshua's body was broken when He died for us. Three days later, Yeshua rose from the dead. We are to believe that Yeshua died for our sins and rose from the dead and that He is our Messiah and God just as the Jews expected the Messiah to be God (Jeremiah 23:5-6).

Yochanan the Immerser was the Elijah who came before Yeshua to lead people to the Messiah Yeshua. John 1:29 CJB says, "The next day, Yochanan saw Yeshua coming toward him and said, "Look! God's lamb! The one who is taking away the sin of the world!" 1 Cor. 5:7-8 CJB tells us to keep the Passover, "Get rid of the old hametz, so that you can be a new batch of dough, because in reality you are unleavened. For our Pesach lamb, the Messiah, has been sacrificed. So let us celebrate the Seder not with leftover hametz, the hametz of wickedness and evil, but with the matzah of purity and truth." Shaul (Paul) says, "keep the Passover."

The believers in the Messiah taught:

"For among the first things I passed on to you was what I also received, namely this: the Messiah died for our sins, in accordance with what the Tanakh says; and he was buried; and he was raised on the third day, in accordance with what the Tanakh says; and he was seen by Kefa, then by the Twelve; and afterwards he was seen by more than five hundred brothers at one time, the majority of whom are still alive, though some have died. Later he was seen by Ya'akov, then by all the emissaries; and last of all he was seen by me.;" 1 Cor. 15:3-8 CJB.

God has made us His chosen kings and priests and has given us blessings and refreshing. It says in Numbers 19:5-6 CJB about Israel, "'Then you will be my own treasure from among all the peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you will be a kingdom of cohanim for me, a nation set apart.' These are the words you are to speak to the people of Isra'el." Kefa (Peter) says about those who believe in the Messiah

Yeshua, "But you are a chosen people, the King's cohanim, a holy nation, a people for God to possess! 1 Peter 2:9 CJB.

How amazing is it that we can be favored by the creator of the universe! When we consider that God brought some 2 million people out of Egypt, it is hardly fathomable. The people had some time to prepare between the 1st plague and the last plague, but the all-powerful God did the impossible. God tells them they are a special people to Him, a unique treasure and he meant all 2 million people. Also, all those who believe in the Messiah are also highly favored – all the millions of people who have believed; that is amazing. God can do that because He is God. How God took care of Israel is a picture of how God takes care of the believers in the Jewish Messiah Yeshua.

Be a people of understanding; look into the scriptures as they were intended. God really does love those who love Him. God really did love Israel and He called Israel. They developed a culture around the scriptures and they imposed laws to help the people follow God. They imposed so many laws though that the people were burdened by them. Since Yeshua is God (Jeremiah 23:5-6), He gave the laws at Mt. Sinai and He says, "Come to me, all of you who are struggling and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls;" Matthew 11:28-29 CJB.

The burden Yeshua is talking about are all the extra wrongly imposed laws in His day. Some laws can be understood from the laws we have in the Torah. The Torah needs to be applied correctly though. Some rabbis say we should put on our right shoe first. What does that have to do with God? Yeshua says He will give us rest, not unrest and lots of unfounded laws of men. Yeshua tells them to take His "yoke," the yoke He gave them at Mt. Sinai. "Yoke" was a cultural word for the commandments in the Torah. Roshi (an important Jewish Rabbi) said about Deut. 13:13 'that the people who follow B'liya'al (Belial) are those that break the yoke of Torah.'

God gives us His help and mercy so we can turn our lives around and live good lives. We need God's commandments as they were intended because they help us to live right. He gives us His words in the Bible and the Holy Spirit to help us. He didn't need to help us, but He cares about us and is a merciful God. Exodus 34:6-7 CJB says, "Merciful and compassionate, slow to anger, rich in grace and truth; showing grace to the thousandth generation, forgiving offenses, crimes and sins; yet not exonerating the guilty."

God is not a big mean judge who wants to rule us and force us to comply. He is the creator who knows what's best for us and wants to help us. This is a time of testing for mankind. Some want to do what is right and some just want to do things their way. Those who want to do what is right, want to follow a loving God who is kind and good. Those who follow their own ways often don't care about how their actions affect others – they just want to follow their sinful behaviors.

Think about what results people get from sinful behaviors.
Hurt, pain, destruction, injury, murder ...

Yet, God is merciful and helps us so we can turn our lives around no matter who we are. We can turn our lives around and live for the better by following our good and loving God. Talking about keeping God's commandments in Deuteronomy 4:6 CJB, "Therefore, observe them; and follow them; for then all peoples will see you as having wisdom and understanding. When they hear of all these laws, they will say, 'This great nation is surely a wise and understanding people.'" Isn't that amazing! We have a good God.

God even came in the form of a man to help us. Yeshua was our example, He gave His life to free us from sin and for our forgiveness, and He also gave us the Holy Spirit. Philippians 2:6-9 NKJV says:

"Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name."

God is definitely an active and good God and he is still at work, wanting to help us.

God pours out His working from heaven. He poured out his favor (grace) from heaven and freed Israel from the Egyptians so they could serve Him. Likewise, Yeshua came from heaven and gave Himself for us to free us from sin. Yeshua came to set us free. "And a slave of the Lord shouldn't fight. On the contrary, he should be kind to everyone, a good teacher, and not resentful when mistreated. Also he should be gentle as he corrects his opponents. For God may perhaps grant them the opportunity to turn from their sins, acquire full knowledge of the truth, come to their senses and escape the trap of the Adversary, after having been captured alive by him to do his will;" 2 Timothy 2:24-26 CJB.

People that don't know God are trapped in their wrong behaviors. It says these people are captured alive by the traps of the devil, the adversary. It is definitely a concern. Shaul said, "I fear that somehow your minds may be seduced away from simple and pure devotion to the Messiah, just as Havah was deceived by the serpent and his craftiness;" 2 Corinthians 11:3 CJB. Havah, Eve, was deceived by the devil; people need God's help and deliverance and He wants to give us His help.

Romans 5:5 CJB says we have hope, "This hope does not let us down, because God's love for us has already been poured out in our hearts through the Ruach HaKodesh who has been given to us. God gave the Holy Spirit. It is a gift from heaven. John 14:15-17 NKJV says, "If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever —the Spirit of truth." Here is another scripture in the same chapter, "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you;" John 14:26 NKJV.

God freed Israel on Passover so they could serve God and the Messiah gave Himself as our Passover sacrifice to give us hope and help us to follow God. Who would want to turn down God's help? God cares about us and He considers us to be His chosen and holy people. How special is that? The Messiah's burden is easy; God's laws are not difficult to keep (For this mitzvah which I am giving you today is not too hard for you;" Deuteronomy 30:11 CJB.). God is a loving and good God that has poured out His grace in the past on Israel and continues to pour our His favor and give us the Holy Spirit after we believe in the Messiah Yeshua. Be faithful, don't be deceived by the world and its sinful ways. God is there for us, giving us hope, and setting us free to live for Him.