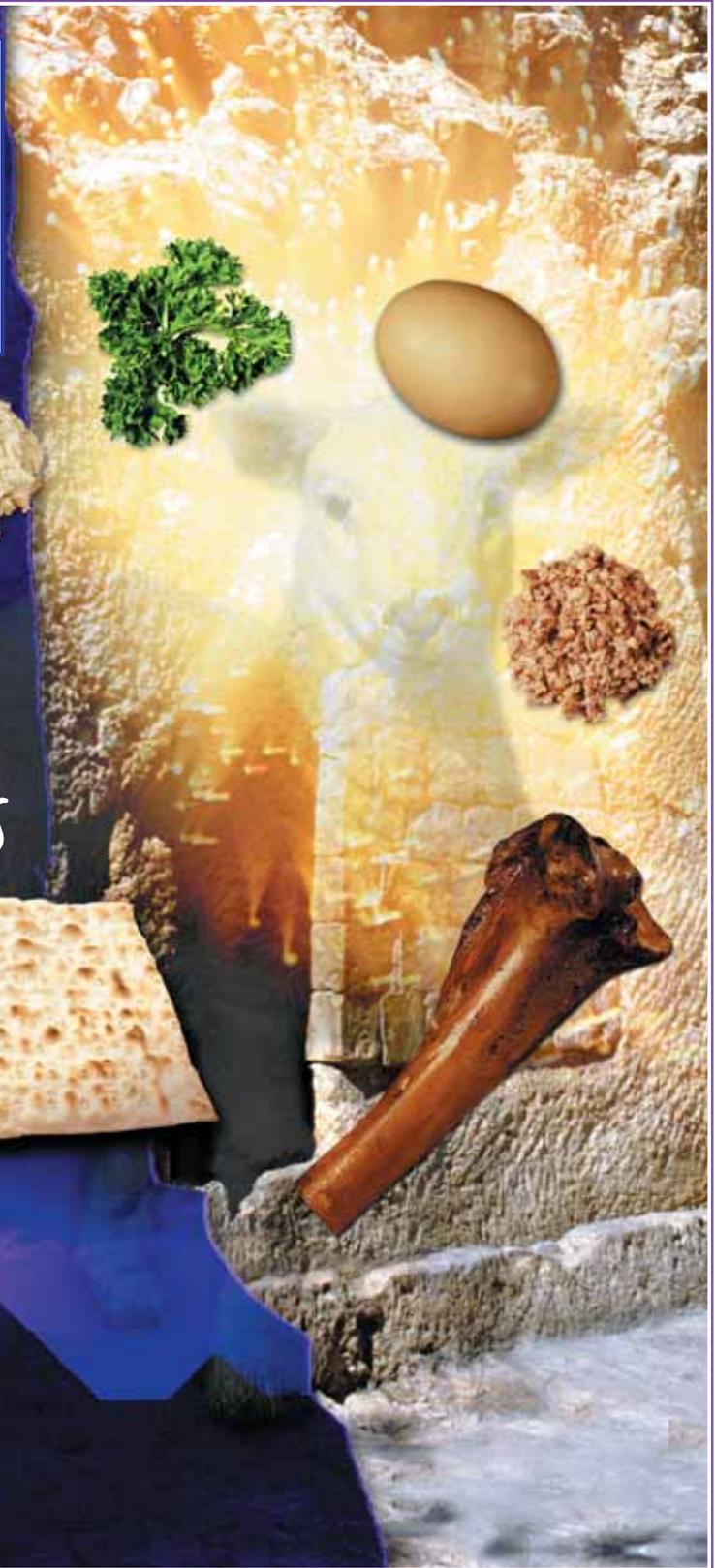


The Chosen People

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PASSOVER:
REMEMBER
THAT GOD HAS
A PLAN



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Something's Missing!

Shalom from New York City!

Passover is upon us and, as with every Jewish festival, Zhava, the girls and I will celebrate the holiday in a “Messianic” way—as fulfilled in Jesus. We will have a number of different *Seders* (Passover banquets) both in English and Russian! We will also observe the festival with our extended family, none of whom are yet believers in Jesus.

We all especially love our family Passover *Seder*. My kids love being with their cousins, and I enjoy the warmth of our extended family, the once-a-year dishes that are only enjoyed at Passover, and the memories of Seders past when all our parents *and* grandparents were still alive.

Yet for the last thirty-plus years, I have left every family *Seder* knowing that something is missing. My heart aches because the real meaning of redemption, so obvious to me, seems so very hidden from my family. Yet, in the hidden elements of the Passover, the most profound, life-changing truths are waiting to be discovered!

Passover Customs

The majority of the instructions on how to perform a *Seder* are found in the *Haggadah* (literally “the telling”). This special liturgical

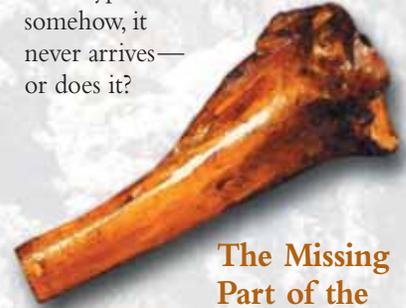
guidebook is a complex collection of rabbinic customs and traditions that has taken shape through the centuries.

There are many kinds of *Haggadahs* from around the world. They are often beautiful works of art that showcase the skills of the best illustrators and printers of the Jewish artisan community. Some older *Haggadahs* are treasures of museum quality, but the majority of them are made to be used. Chosen People Ministries produces an excellent Messianic Passover *Haggadah*, compiled by former president Rev. Harold Sevensen.

There are many different themes that pervade Passover, such as redemption, God’s faithfulness, His power, and others that are emphasized through the many customs and songs found in the *Haggadah*. But one of the most fascinating themes of Passover involves something that is missing.

This missing something is mysterious, and its meaning is tantalizingly hidden from view! One of the purposes of the *Seder* is to provoke the participants to search for it. It is as though the Sages of Israel used not only what we can see and taste at the Passover, but also what is absent, to cause the children of Israel to wonder about God’s plan and

purpose for the Jewish people. The Passover *Seder* appears to be taking us someplace. It causes us to crave for some type of fulfillment. Yet somehow, it never arrives—or does it?



The Missing Part of the Passover

The most important missing item from the Passover might almost be called its guest of honor! It is the lamb itself. Although lamb is eaten at Passover by some Jewish communities around the world, for many Jewish people of Eastern European ancestry such as myself, lamb is not a part of the Passover meal. Instead, only the shank bone of the lamb is present on the *Seder* plate as a mute witness of a sacrifice that cannot be offered because of the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD.

During the *Seder* ceremony, the shank bone of the lamb is raised when the leader invites someone to read the account of the tenth plague in the *Haggadah*. The story is taken directly from the Book of Exodus, chapter 12. A young, perfectly healthy lamb was to be taken from the family flock and killed. The blood of the lamb was to be smeared on the upper crossbeam of the house and on the two sides of the door. On the first Passover, after the door was closed, the angel of death swept through the

The Passover Seder craves It appears to be headed some j

land of Goshen and throughout Egypt killing the first-born males left unprotected by the lamb's blood.

Those homes in which Jewish families were obedient to Moses' instructions would be spared. This is the primary reason for raising the shank bone of the lamb: to call attention to the deliverance of the Jewish people by the shed blood of the lamb. Yet, the shank bone also reminds the Jewish people that we have no altar, no holy place for blood sacrifice. For now, God's ancient people await a future day when all will be restored.

The Missing Sacrifice and the Hope of Restoration

The message of the Jewish sages who compiled the Haggadah is not lost on the Orthodox Jewish people. They know something is missing from Passover. They think that this something can be restored only with the rebuilding of the Temple and the resumption of the sacrifices by the hand of the Messiah. The Orthodox Jew's deepest yearning is for that something to be restored.

This sense of incompleteness and hopeful expectation is well captured in a traditional Passover song, sung near the end of the Seder. The Hebrew words are, *"Ishana haba b'yrushalayim,"* which mean, "next year in Jerusalem." It is the hope of every traditional Jewish person that the redemption that failed to materialize this year will come next year... or the year after, or the year after that!

The message of the shank bone is not lost on those Jews and non-Jews who follow Jesus as the promised Messiah. The lamb described in

Exodus chapter 12 is a prophetic portrait of future redemption to be offered through the Lamb of God who was yet to come.

Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Pick out and take lambs for yourselves according to your families, and kill the Passover lamb. And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning. For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you" (Exodus 12:21-23).

In Isaiah chapter 53, the prophet adds texture to the portrait of the Messiah as the Lamb of God. He describes the One to come, who would die for the sin of the Jewish people and the entire world as a sacrificial lamb.

He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth (Isaiah 53:7).

Behold the Lamb of God

John the Baptist, the cousin of Jesus, added bright and compelling colors to the painting when, by the banks of the Jordan, he saw Jesus and cried out:

...The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29).

John's wonderful and amazing proclamation supplies the key.

What is missing from the traditional Jewish Passover Seder is the glorious truth that Jesus is the Lamb of God. As the innocent lamb of Exodus 12, Jesus was without sin. His blood was smeared on the altar of Calvary so that when a man or woman applies the blood of the sacrifice of the Lamb of God to the doorpost of his or her heart, the wrath of God passes over.

As the Apostle Paul writes, "...For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7). The shank bone may now be viewed, not as pointing to what is missing, but to what has been so wonderfully fulfilled. As believers in Jesus the Messiah, we look back on His finished work at Calvary and look forward to His reign as our coming King.

That day is coming soon, and we dare not lose any time in telling both Jews and Gentiles the good news that what was missing is now found. Jesus is the Lamb of God who has taken away the sins of the world. Thanks for your partnership in reaching our Jewish people for the Lamb—and Happy Passover!

Your brother in the Messiah,

Mitch
Mitch



Dr. Mitch Glaser
President

If you would like to celebrate a Messianic Passover Seder with Chosen People Ministries, please call our Church Ministries office at 1-888-405-5874. They will help you find one of these events, if there is one scheduled in your local area.

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Behold Yeshua—

the Passover Lamb of God

Have you ever heard a marvelous piece of news that left you thunderstruck and open-mouthed with amazement? Those in the presence of John the Baptist must have experienced exactly that as they listened to his words recorded in John 1:29—“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

But what did John really mean? A brief survey of the Lamb and its multi-faceted identity in Scripture and the Jewish world may bring us a deeper understanding of Messiah’s fulfillment of John’s puzzling words.

The Sacrificial Substitute in Genesis

Sheep are among the earliest domesticated animals in the world, and it is not surprising that they play a prominent role in the ancient nomadic culture depicted in the Book of Genesis. The first references to the Lamb as sacrifice is in the powerful story of Abraham and Isaac. Genesis 22 tells us that God tested Abraham by

commanding him, “... Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you” (Genesis 22:2).

There is a world of unspoken communication in the exchange between father and son as Isaac asked, “Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?”

Has there ever been a greater affirmation of faith than Abraham’s response? “My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering” (Genesis 22:7-8).

We know that the Angel of the Lord stayed Abraham’s hand and that Isaac—a Messianic forerunner in his obedient submission—was spared. But the ram—an adult male sheep—was sacrificed in his stead.



The Passover Lamb

We next meet the Lamb as a presence of sacrificial covering in the Book of Exodus. To this day, the account recorded in Exodus 12 is read at Jewish tables at Passover celebrations throughout the world.

“Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the tenth day

of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household... Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it’” (Exodus 12:3, 6, 7).

As the children of Israel awaited their deliverance from slavery to Pharaoh, they beheld the awesome power of the Lord and His judgment upon the Egyptians.

In the New Testament record of the Last Supper, it seems quite reasonable, as many scholars attest, to make the connection between John the Baptist’s words in John 1:29 and the Gospel’s words in John 19:36. The words, “For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, ‘Not one of His bones shall be broken,’” are an explicit reference to the Passover Lamb in Exodus 12:46.

By the time we reach the Second Temple period, the number of lambs sacrificed for Passover would seem to us to be staggering. The historian Josephus asserts in *The Jewish War* that in the year 66 AD there were 256,500 lambs sacrificed at Passover. Even if we consider this to be an inflated figure, only one-tenth that number is scarcely imaginable.

But in Jesus’ day, the Lamb had already come to mean much more than a simple blood sacrifice—and the expanded meaning of this already powerful symbol may

provide a key to our understanding of what the words of John could have meant to his listeners.

The Lamb in Pseudepigraphal Literature

The Lamb of God is a familiar Biblical image of sacrifice and submission. We think of the Messianic “lamb led to the slaughter” in Isaiah 53:7, for example. Yet, by New Testament times, the Lamb had acquired an additional dimension—one of triumph!

The image of the triumphant Lamb of God appears in the apocalyptic literature of the Pseudepigrapha

(“false” writings), written in the intertestamental and New Testament periods. This era of tumult, which also produced the Dead Sea Scrolls, was charged with Messianic expectation.

One such work, *The Testament of Joseph*, contains the verse “Do ye therefore, my children, observe the commandments of the LORD, and honor Levi and Judah; for from them shall arise unto you the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world, one who saveth all the Gentiles and Israel” (2 Joseph 77). The similarity of these words to those of John the Baptist is most striking. (Some scholars believe they may have been added later by Christians.)

Perhaps the best-known work in which the imagery of the victorious Lamb is found is the *First Book of Enoch*. This work, written before the first century AD, carried much weight at the time the New Testament was written, and is even quoted in the *Epistle of Jude* (Jude 14-15).

Although scholars may debate the fine points, these sources do provide a context for understanding the fifth chapter of the Book of Revelation—Scripture’s most powerful image of the triumphant Lamb. Here the Lamb of God is revealed as the suffering, resurrected and triumphant servant of the Lord—none other than Jesus the Messiah.

And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain... Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten

thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!” (Revelation 5:6,11-12).

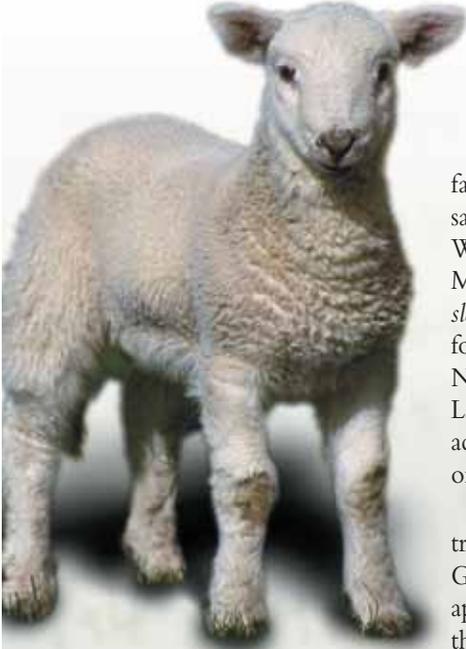
The Passover Lamb and the Redemption of the World

The image of sacrificial suffering and triumphant victory is perhaps most fully realized in the words of Revelation 13:8—“...the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”

Now we see the redemption of God at work not only through the eyes of the children of Israel delivered at the Exodus, not only through the eyes of those who witnessed the awesome power of the resurrection at the empty tomb, but as though through the eyes of the Lord Himself at Creation. We see redemption, if you will, as a foundational building block of reality.

The story of this sweeping vision is foretold in Scripture, demonstrated at Passover, and fulfilled at the Cross and the Resurrection. For Yeshua is truly *the* Lamb of God, whose blood has paid for our sins and has purchased our salvation.

Source consulted and for further reading: Skinner, Christopher, “Another Look at the Lamb of God” http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page_id=387



See the THROUGH JEWISH EYES Bible

by Daniel Goldberg, Th.D., D.D.



David— The Shepherd Who Became a King

Modern-day people who have been nurtured by the blessings of democracy sometimes have difficulty understanding the Lord's "election process." But we must remember that our ways are not

His ways (Isaiah 55:8). The story of David's elevation to royalty is a lesson that shows us that the Lord looks beyond the superficial qualities that seem so attractive to us.

The Kingly Qualifications of the Shepherd's Life

The prophet Samuel was sent by God to Jesse's house in Bethlehem to choose a king among Jesse's sons. I Samuel 16 tells us that David's older brothers were paraded one by one before Samuel. The prophet, impressed with the appearance of Jesse's son Eliab, declared, "...Surely the LORD's anointed is before him!" (I Samuel 16:6b).

However, the Lord declared, "...Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see

as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart" (I Samuel 16:7). Of course, when David arrived home from his shepherding duties, he was chosen to succeed King Saul. David was thirty years old at the beginning of his rule (2 Samuel 5:4) and probably a lad of about sixteen when Samuel anointed him.

A Shepherd's Skills Befitting a King

David seems not to have forgotten his life as a shepherd, as shown by some of the "nature" psalms that he penned later in life, which likely echoed his inspired thoughts while tending his father's flock under the starry sky. Three of these psalms are worthy of consideration in this brief article.

In Psalm 8, for example, David reflected upon one of life's most important questions: "*What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?*" (8:4). David believed God visited man and made him a king at Creation (8:6). The writer to the Hebrews quotes Psalm 8 (Hebrews 2:6-18), believing that God also visited humanity when the Messiah Jesus came to "taste death" for everyone (Hebrews 2:9).

In Psalm 19, David states that God has written two great books: His book of nature (19:1-6) and His book of Scripture (19:7-11). The heavens are the embroidery work of God's fingers (19:1) while the Scriptures are the utterances of His mouth (19:7-11). David declared that God's word challenges (19:7), cheers (19:8) and changes us (19:9,10).

Lastly, we have Psalm 23, David's masterpiece. Its theme is verse one, "*The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.*"

As a shepherd, David provided for all the needs of his sheep. In this great Psalm, David reveals the Divine Shepherd's provision for His own sheep. Here we find provision for all secular needs (23:2), for all spiritual needs (23:3,4), for all social needs (23:5) and for all security needs (23:6).

Who is Your Shepherd?

You may have heard Psalm 23 many times in your life. But can you say with conviction that "The Lord is my shepherd?" Jesus declared, "*I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep*" (John 10:11).

Have you asked Messiah to be the shepherd of your life and soul? If you have not, now would be a good time to do so! ✠

SPRING BREAK OUTREACH IN ISRAEL

The next generation of Chosen People Ministries' missionaries is on the field! The daughter of two of our beloved staff members helped lead a group from Dartmouth College on a mission trip to Israel for spring break. The team stayed at our new Messianic Center in Jerusalem. They spent their time ministering to Israelis who have been injured in terrorist attacks, encouraging the youth of Messianic congregations and engaging in conversational evangelism in the evenings.



JEWISH SEEKER FINDS MESSIAH IN "THE PLACE HE WAS LOOKING FOR"

Chosen People Ministries' Messianic congregation in Buenos Aires is a magnet for seekers. At one weekly service, a Jewish couple who were invited by believing friends visited the congregation. She was a believer in the Messiah, but he was not. The unbelieving husband was impressed with the service and told Ricardo Chemi, the congregational leader, that this was "the place he was looking for." The two couples continued their conversation later, talking about the Messiah. At the end of their talk, the man received the Lord. He said that what helped him to find the Messiah was finding a place that let him put his love for Israel and his thoughts about Jesus together.

RUSSIAN JEWISH MINISTRY EXPANDING "DOWN UNDER"

Rita I., who works with Celebrate Messiah, Chosen People Ministries' partner in Australia, reports that once a month, she and her fellow workers pick up Russian Jews and bring them to a special service in Caulfield (a suburb of Melbourne). During lunch they have live Russian, Yiddish and Hebrew music and a Russian-language service. They also invite the Russian people to the English services at their Messianic congregation and provide simultaneous translation into Russian via headphones. Rita also visits Russian Jews who are terminally ill and helps them with their groceries and other chores. So far this year, five Russian Jewish people have received the Lord through the faithful witness of Rita and her co-workers for Messiah.



JERUSALEM MESSIANIC CENTER UPDATE

"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock" (Matthew 7:24).

A beautiful, well-located building in Jerusalem, the center of the Jewish universe, is a blessing beyond description. But without the presence of the Lord and a people consecrated to His service, even such a building is nothing but stone and mortar.

Happily, Chosen People Ministries is blessed with a staff whose commitment is already making a difference, for the Lord is drawing seekers and servants to Himself through them and through this wonderful facility.

The Center's schedule is already getting quite busy serving people from overseas seeking to use the building for short-term mission efforts. Looking ahead, most of the available slots in June, July and August are already filled by teams of young people with Chosen People Ministries' "Outreach Israel" program.

The Center has already hosted two training seminars, one for worship leaders and the other for youth pastors. In this way, we are gaining opportunities today to serve the Messiah's body throughout the land by teaching and equipping the young leaders who will carry the future of the Messianic movement.

Please pray that the Lord's words in Luke 19:9 will be heard often in the Jerusalem Messianic Center:

"Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham."

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Doug McEvoy,
Director of
Stewardship

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Please remember Chosen People Ministries in your will. "I will bless those who bless you." (Genesis 12:3)