

The Chosen People



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PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL THROUGH THE PASSOVER

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THE JEWISH MESSIAH IS THE PASSOVER LAMB

Dear friend in the Messiah,

Shalom and Happy Passover. I must admit, it is very unusual to observe Passover after already celebrating Easter. This is the result of the early church deciding not to follow the Jewish calendar! This decision was made at the Council of Nicaea in 325AD and, in my opinion, it reflects a symptom of a deeper problem we address each and every day as we try and reach Jewish people for Jesus the Messiah.

The Chasm Between Jesus and the Jewish People

Jewish people generally feel alienated from the Gospel. This chasm between

Jesus and the Jewish community becomes even more profound during the holiday season. We so often define ourselves religiously by the holidays we keep. For example, Jewish people celebrate Passover and Christians celebrate Easter. If it were a different season of the year I would say that Jewish people celebrate Hanukkah, and Christians celebrate Christmas.

Oftentimes I wonder how this difficult situation we face today came to be and why it is that Jewish people feel so distant from the One we believe to be the fulfillment of the Hebrew Scriptures—the Jewish Messiah.

May I tell you a quick story about my grandparents? It might help you understand how Jewish people feel about the Jewish relationship to Jesus and Christianity.

I remember a conversation I had with my paternal grandparents many years ago. My father and I were visiting his parents and we were eating lunch at the table in my grandparents' apartment in Coney Island, Brooklyn. My dear grandparents were trying to figure out why I believed in Jesus and not Moses or Marx.

I finally had the chance to get a word in and asked a question. I said, "Dad does not believe in God, and like Grandpa he never attends synagogue. Yet, he still says that he is Jewish. I, on the other hand, believe in the God of our fathers, learned Hebrew, married a Jewish girl, but believe Jesus is the Messiah. Which one of us is the better Jew?" Grandma did not hesitate to respond. "Your father," she replied. And I dare say she spoke for the majority of the Jewish community!

What she really was saying is that being Jewish is not a matter of belief, but rather of community identity.

And a Jewish person can retain that identity as long as certain lines are not crossed. However, if you do transgress



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one of these unseen parameters, you could easily cross over and out of the Jewish community. Believing in Jesus is one of those lines, perhaps the boldest of the lines, and once you cross over there is no return save the renunciation of your beliefs. In other words, you do not remain in the community by virtue of your beliefs, but you can be removed because of them.

The Jewish people you meet might be resistant to the Gospel far more because of their fear of community sanctions than because of any theological disagreement over the true Messiah. Jewish people are generally not going to consider the Gospel—because they feel far away from Jesus, view Him as the God of the Gentiles and have a deep fear of being cast out of the Jewish community for even thinking about Jesus.

The Lord must shed an abundance of grace in the heart of the average Jewish person in order for them to make the great step of faith to follow Jesus when the Jewish community would understand this belief as an act of ethnic suicide. It was certainly a difficult decision for me having been raised in a traditional Jewish home!

How Can You Help?

You can try to help your Jewish friend understand that Jesus is Jewish, the New Testament was written by Jewish people and that all of the early followers of Jesus were Jewish. In fact, the disciples celebrated Passover and other Jewish festivals, never rejected their Jewish identity and did not choose to leave the Jewish community.

The disciples believed that you could be Jewish and believe that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah.

You can take some very practical steps even during this Passover season to help your Jewish friends understand that Jesus is Jewish and that Christians have a deep appreciation for their Old Testament heritage.

First of all, in the middle section of this newsletter we have provided some great ways you can use the Passover seder as an evangelistic tool. Showing Jesus in His Jewish context is wonderful! Passover is a great time to do this because, unlike some of the other Jewish holidays, most Jewish people celebrate Passover and have a family Passover *seder* (meal). **And of course, Jesus clearly linked Himself to the Passover!**

You can also send a beautiful Passover card to your Jewish friend, as it is a very appropriate time of the year to send greeting cards wishing your Jewish friends a happy Passover. You can also give a small gift to your Jewish friend that shows your sensitivity to the holiday season. You might give your Jewish friend a box of macarons, wonderful coconut cookies that are made without leaven... this is a Jewish favorite—especially the ones that are dipped in dark chocolate!

This demonstration of love and sensitivity will go a long way to showing your Jewish friends that Jesus is Jewish. It is a way of bringing the Gospel closer to a Jewish person, overcoming the 2,000-year chasm between Jesus and the Jewish people.

You might also celebrate a Passover seder either in your home, with your small group or even at your church. Chosen People Ministries will be presenting Messiah in the Passover at many different congregations during the holiday season. If you would like to attend one of these demonstrations, please call our Church Ministries office at 888-405-5874 and we will let you know if there is a Messiah in the Passover scheduled at a church near you.

You can also go to our website (www.chosenpeople.com/Passover) and learn more about the Passover. We have prepared a booklet to help you understand more about Passover that you can request on our website and you can also look at some of the Passover videos we have made that can actually show you how to do a Passover seder in

your own home.

Is it any wonder that Jesus chose Passover as the time to announce the inauguration of the New Covenant between God and man? The focus of Passover is the redemption of the Jewish people from Egypt. Of course Jesus gives the Passover a deeper meaning demonstrating that new life, forgiveness of sin and an eternity in heaven are assured to those who have faith in **the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.**

Let's not allow the Jewish community we love to feel alienated from Jesus. I hope this Passover season will afford you the opportunity to help your Jewish friends see Jesus in the Passover! That will be a great place to begin your witness.

Thank you so much for your faithfulness, love and support of Chosen People Ministries. We are doing all we can in 16 countries and over 20 cities in North America to bring the Good News of Jesus the Messiah to the Jewish people. I know you will enjoy the rest of this special Passover issue of *The Chosen People* newsletter as you continue to pray for us.

I also hope that you will consider supporting Chosen People Ministries on a regular basis. This is why we created the Watchmen for Jerusalem program. Please visit www.chosenpeople.com/watchmen to sign up or use the back of the enclosed card. Your one-time donation is also very important to us as it allows us to continue to support our ministries around the globe—in the United States, Israel and in many other countries.

Thank you again for your love and faithfulness and Happy Passover!

In the Lamb,



Mitch



Dr. Mitch Glaser
President

SHARING THE GOSPEL Through the Passover Seder

Passover is the story of redemption. It reveals how God redeemed our Jewish people from the bondage of slavery in Egypt and also delivered those Egyptians who chose to identify with the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The Passover begins with a seder, a Hebrew word that means "order" or "service" and refers to the ancient ceremonial meal that begins the Passover festival. Each aspect of the ceremonial meal can be used to proclaim the good news of Messiah Yeshua with those who have never experienced salvation through faith, by accepting and putting their trust in Yeshua, the Passover Lamb, as their Messiah and Savior.

Sharing the Good News . . . Through the Matzah

One of the most important elements of a traditional Jewish Passover seder is the *matzah*, or unleavened bread. At the beginning of the seder, the leader will hold the matzah and explain that the Jewish people were forced to flee Egypt in great haste. They had no time to bake their bread and could not wait for the dough to rise. Therefore, God commanded Israel to abstain from eating yeast for seven days, beginning on the first night of Passover every year, as a remembrance of their deliverance from Egypt (Ex. 12:17-20).

Since leaven is often a symbol for sin in the Bible (1 Cor. 5:7; Matt. 16:6), the removal of leaven from the household before Passover has come to symbolize the need to examine our hearts in repentance as the preparatory work necessary in order to receive God's redemptive blessings in the Messiah. The matzah of Passover itself, which appears bruised, pierced, and broken, was also used by Jesus Himself as a representation of His sinless body that was broken and offered to God for our sins (Lk. 22:19).

Through the Bitter Herbs & Parsley

Two other important elements of a traditional Jewish Passover seder are the parsley (*karpas*) dipped in salt water and the bitter herbs. Towards the beginning of the seder all participants will take parsley, dip it twice in salt water and eat it. The salt water symbolizes the tears that Israel shed in Egypt, as well as the salt of the Red Sea. The parsley symbolizes the hyssop that Israel used to place the blood of the Passover lamb on their doorposts, as well as the spring season during which Passover occurs.

The bitter herbs, usually horseradish, are eaten during the beginning of the seder meal as a reminder of the

Why Are Easter and Passover So Far Apart this Year?

We have already celebrated Easter and now we are about to celebrate Passover! You might be wondering how this happened. Very simply, the leaders of the early Church decided to separate Christianity from Judaism by rejecting the lunar calendar of Judaism and instead linking the Church to the Gregorian calendar. This is well explained by our Chosen People Ministries' researchers who have outlined this on our website. However, because some of you are not able to look at our website I thought that I would simply quote the site for you so that you have the information in front of you.

The two holidays are based on two different calendars. Easter is based on the solar calendar, the calendar commonly used today. In Western churches, Easter is dated as the first Sunday after the first full moon of spring. It therefore occurs somewhere between March 22 and April 25. Eastern Orthodox churches have a different approach based on the lunar calendar.

Passover on the other hand is based on the Jewish calendar; a lunar calendar that has twelve, 28-day months. Every two or three years there is a 13th month, called Adar II, included in the calendar. Over the course of a 19-year cycle this "extra" month occurs in the 3rd, 6th, 8th, 11th, 14th, 17th and 19th years. The year 2008 was one of those years with an extra month. Passover occurs from the 15th to the 21st of the month of Nisan - which is the month right after the "extra" month of Adar II. The inclusion of the "extra" month in the lunar calendar thus caused Passover to fall nearly 30 days after Easter in 2008.¹

Passover is April 23 this year and continues for seven days as it is combined with the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Easter was celebrated on March 27th this year. The Eastern Orthodox Easter was in fact even earlier this year as they follow the Julian calendar.

¹ <http://chosenpeople.com/main/index.php/holidays-and-festivals/236-frequently-asked-questions-about-passover>

bitterness of being enslaved in Egypt. God commanded Israel to eat the bitter herbs every year during Passover (Ex. 12:8) so that they would remember the harsh conditions of their slavery and not look back to Egypt with nostalgic longing. Even so, followers of the Messiah today, by consuming the parsley dipped in salt water and the bitter herbs, can remember how Jesus delivers us from the bondage of sin and death.

Through the Shank Bone

In addition to the matzah, parsley and bitter herbs, another crucial element on the seder plate is the shank bone of a lamb. This recalls the sacrificial lambs of the first Passover. Exodus records that God told the Israelites to place the blood of the lamb on the lintel and doorposts of their houses. When the angel of death went through the land of Egypt, all who had the blood of the lamb as a covering on their houses were passed over and saved. Thus God said in Exodus 12:13, *“When I see the blood I will pass over you.”*

The centrality of the lamb at Passover gives us one of the clearest pictures of the Gospel in the entire Old Testament. The concept of the Passover lamb was ultimately understood by the prophet Isaiah as depicting the sacrifice of the Messiah for the sins of Israel and the Nations (Isa. 53). Thus, when we celebrate the Passover today we are remembering the sacrifice of Jesus who gave His life for our redemption. As Paul says, *“Christ our Passover has also been sacrificed”* (1 Cor. 5:7). In the same way that Israel needed the blood of the lamb in order to experience redemption from Egypt, all people today need the blood of the ultimate Lamb, Jesus the Jewish Messiah, in order to be forgiven by God for their sins and to escape eternal judgment.

Through the Cup of Redemption

Apart from the primary elements on the seder plate, a traditional Jewish Passover revolves around four cups of wine which are consumed at different times, from the beginning to the end of the seder. These cups of wine

correspond to God’s four “I will” statements in Exodus 6:6-7 and are often called, 1) the cup of blessing, 2) the cup of judgment, 3) the cup of redemption and 4) the cup of Elijah.

We read in the Gospel of Luke that at His last seder meal with the disciples, Jesus “took the cup after they had eaten, saying, *‘This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood’*” (Lk. 22:20).

The cup used by Jesus as a symbol for the New Covenant was the third cup, the Cup of Redemption, which ultimately found its way into Christianity via the traditional communion service. This serves as a constant reminder of the central theme of the Passover, that God accomplishes our redemption through the blood of the Lamb, Jesus the Messiah.

Summary

In so many ways the Passover seder makes the Good News clear. To anyone honest and open to God and His message to them, it becomes obvious that through God’s intended elements and man’s additions to the service, Yeshua is the Messiah of Israel, the Passover Lamb.

Yeshua’s death, burial and resurrection are observed from the very beginning with the dipping of the parsley to the last cup at the table. It is these elements that make it possible to explain the Gospel at the Passover seder with all people, for Jewish people especially, and also Gentiles. All who love the Lord should make it their desire and prayer to God that the Good News in the Passover seder be used by Him for the salvation of God’s beloved Jewish people (Rom. 10:1).



Coconut Macaroons

This recipe is easy and delicious! Egg whites are used as a substitute for flour, which is not eaten during Passover. This recipe makes 24 macaroon cookies.

Ingredients:

- 6 egg whites
- 1 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 3 cups shredded coconut

Preparation:

Preheat oven to 325 degrees.

1. Mix the coconut, sugar and vanilla in a bowl.
2. Beat egg whites until fluffy.
3. Fold the egg whites into the coconut mixture.
4. Take a teaspoon of the mixture and roll in your hands until firm.
5. Line up 3 rows of 4 cookies on a greased baking sheet and bake in a 325 degree oven for 12-14 minutes or until the edges are brown.



SEE THE BIBLE THROUGH JEWISH EYES

BY DANIEL GOLDBERG, TH.D., D.D.



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HEBREWS: CHAPTER 1

I. GOD IS THE GOD OF COMMUNICATION - HEBREWS 1:1-10

God has always communicated with His creation. In the ancient world He spoke in various ways, but particularly through the Hebrew prophets. In these “last days” God is speaking through His Son, the Jewish Messiah (Heb. 1:1-2). The text emphasizes the diverse ways God communicates, rather than the numerous eras.

Specifically, God spoke to “*the fathers*,” that is the Jewish ancestors. God addressed the Old Testament saints in diverse ways. At Sinai, God addressed Moses through thunder and lightning. He spoke with the “*voice of a trumpet*.” At Horeb, God addressed Elijah in “a still small voice.” He revealed Himself to Ezekiel through visions and to Daniel in dreams. To Jacob, He was an angelic visitor. Although in each circumstance it was the God of Israel who spoke, He communicated through various media.

In these “last days,” God is speaking through His Son, the Jewish Messiah. It is not merely one utterance, but many messages given at various times (Heb. 1:2). It was “*by the prophets*” God communicated. The Jewish prophets were messengers of God, governed by the Holy Spirit in communicating the divine message, either by the written or spoken word.

Holy messengers of God spoke according to the way the Holy Spirit prompted (2 Pet. 1:21).

In times past, the Old Testament prophets delivered God’s messages “unto the fathers” (Heb. 1:1). Who were these fathers? The fathers were the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and included generation after generation of the nation of Israel, culminating in Jesus, the Jewish Messiah.

But now, God has spoken His last Word “in” or “by” His Son. The Son is the rightful “heir” of all things (Heb. 1:2). This term describes one who is the possessor, or sovereign Lord. As the Incarnate Son, Jesus the Son of Man has been appointed the heir and owner of all God’s Creation.

God’s Son has been made head of a new people. Because of what He did in leaving heaven’s glory and becoming obedient unto the death at the cross for sin, God has highly exalted Him. At the sound of His Name, every knee shall bow (Phil. 2:9-11).

II. GOD IS THE GOD OF CULMINATION - HEBREWS 1:11-14

Although God did not design the original creation for destruction, the writer reminds us it will perish (Heb. 1:11). However, the Eternal Son enjoys equality with the Father and

will remain forever (Heb. 1:8). “*They shall perish, but Thou remainest...*” (Heb. 1:11). The words of Hebrews 1:11-12 illustrate the eternal and changeless divine nature of the Messiah. This chapter demonstrates the vast contrast between all the created angels and the uncreated Messiah Jesus. The angels are beings created by God, but the Messiah existed from eternity past. In fact, God designed the angels to worship the Messianic King (Heb. 1:6), whom the Father refers to as both God and Creator (Heb. 1:8-9).

III. CONCLUSION

Hebrews 1 emphasizes the supremacy of the Messiah. He is unique in His teaching, nature and work (Heb. 1:2-3). Messiah is superior to the angels who worship Him (Heb. 1:6). The Son has ascended to the very throne of God at the Father’s right hand, the place of special honor. Jesus, the Son, who was humiliated on earth (Heb. 12:3) is now exalted and enthroned in heaven. Thus, this first chapter of Hebrews contains a powerful explanation of both the person and work of the Messiah Jesus. He alone is the Creator and sustainer who “upholds all things by the word of His power” (Heb. 1:3).

NEWS BRIEFS



THE GOSPEL "IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGE"

Recently, our staff in Philadelphia was on Temple University's campus. They were sharing all day about God with non-Jewish and Jewish students - including a few from Israel. They write: "We had many in-depth conversations about prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures that point to Yeshua as the Messiah. It was fantastic!" At the end of the day they met an older Christian woman. This dear woman had been trying to share about the Lord with her Jewish friend for many years, but wanted to do it in a way that her friend could better understand. Part of the mission of Chosen People Ministries is to educate and "help fellow believers" to more effectively love, evangelize, and reach the Jewish people. Our team gave the woman a variety of resources and they told her to focus on Messianic prophecies, such as Isaiah 53. Two days later, our staff received a phone call from the Christian woman saying she was able to share in "her Jewish friend's own language" and style! Wonderfully, this 90-year old Jewish lady believed and embraced Yeshua as her own Messiah!

ISRAELI MUSICIAN, SEARCHING FOR THE MEANING OF LIFE, HEARS THE GOSPEL

Ministry continues in Israel. There have been great opportunities for our staff to meet and share with young people through the coffee house music nights our ministry puts on. At a couple of these venues there is a regular crowd. Our staff has been excited about getting to know some of the musicians and regulars, getting to share the Gospel and seeing them when they come back with questions or comments on how interesting it is to think about spiritual things. Some say, "It could be that Jesus is the Messiah." One of these young musicians is Dov.* From a very secular Jewish home, Dov did not learn much

about the scriptures. As a teen he decided there must be something more to why we are here. He has been asking lots of good questions. Recently Dov was introduced to Israeli musicians who believe in Jesus. Please pray for Dov to come to know Jesus in a personal way.

AN ORTHODOX MAN FINDS MESSIAH

With the promise of spring comes the festival of Passover. We absolutely love this holiday and look forward to it every year! The Lord is faithful to do wonderful things during this time and we are sure that this year will be no different. This season is always the busiest for our ministry. God was faithful to bring our staff in Maryland into contact with an Orthodox Jewish man who accepted Jesus as his Messiah recently. It is our prayer that he will keep in contact with us so we can disciple him in his new faith! Please join us in this prayer.

PASSOVER: A PICTURE OF REBIRTH AND



REDEMPTION

This month, the image of new birth is particularly powerful as we prepare to celebrate the Passover. Our Los Angeles staff is planning regular dinners in the park next to the theater in which the congregation regularly meets. They will also have a large visible presence in the park with special artisan coffee and pastries, inviting people to a special service. Our staff member writes, "Since many people in Los Angeles feel lonely and isolated because they have left both family and friends to pursue their career dreams, these citywide dinners will be designed to make those in our community feel both welcomed and loved. Like last year, we are expecting God to do great things, well beyond our imagination."

**name changed*

MESSIANIC RESOURCES

DISCOVER CHOSEN PEOPLE
MINISTRIES' TOOLS TO HELP
YOU SHOW MESSIAH IN THE
PASSOVER TO YOUR FAMILY!

Our special **Passover Set** from Israel has a Seder Plate, *Matzah Tash*, *Kiddush Cup*, *Messianic Haggadah* and *Leader's Manual*. The *Matzah Tash*, or *matzah* cover, is a pouch with three compartments, each holding a piece of *matzah* (unleavened bread). The Seder Plate helps tell the story of the Exodus and points to our Messiah. The *Kiddush Cup* (five inches tall) symbolizes the blood of the sacrificed paschal lamb, or the Lamb of God. It is filled four times during the Passover meal as the story of God's redeeming work among His people, the people of Israel, unfolds. **Items also available for individual purchase.**

Complete Passover Set (5 piece) [5027] • \$78.95 US

For phone orders call 800-333-4936 in the U.S. Or for even more resources visit us online at www.chosenpeople.com/store.



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SPIRITUAL FITNESS

How fit is your spiritual body?



The Chosen People Newsletter

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



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