



Light of Messiah Ministries

...Bringing Jesus to the Jewish People

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Preparing for Passover

In Matthew 26 we read, *“On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, ‘Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?’ He replied, ‘Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, ‘The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.’ So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover.”*

Passover is the holiday celebrating our liberation. It is the holiday when we remember how God, with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, redeemed the people of Israel from slavery and bondage to Pharaoh in Egypt. Preparation was always involved in Jesus day, it is today, and is vital in our own hearts.

Preparation in Jesus Day

God commanded the Israelites to have bitter herbs, unleavened bread, fruit of the vine, and the Passover lamb, on their Passover table. Jesus lived during the period of the second Temple. The sacrifice of the Passover lambs would have taken place there.

The Passover sacrifice was offered by the Israelites at the command of God during the night before the Exodus from Egypt. They ate it with special ceremonies according to divine direction. The blood of this sacrifice sprinkled on the door-posts of the Israelites was to be a sign to the Angel of Death, when passing through the land, to slay the first-born of the Egyptians. That night, the Angel of Death passed by the houses of the Israelites (Exodus 12:1-23). **Death literally passed over.** The



firstborn of the Israelites were spared and the door of freedom was opened.

The sacrificial animal, which was either a lamb or kid, was necessarily a male, one year old, and without blemish. The killing took place in the court of the Temple. The blood had to be caught by a priest, and rows of priests with gold or silver cups in their hands stood in line from the Temple court to the altar, where the blood was sprinkled. **The Lambs were slain.**

The Passover lamb had to be prepared and sacrificed. The home had to be prepared as well. Passover, as the beginning of a seven-day festival called the Feast of Unleavened Bread, required all leaven to be removed from the home. **Unleavened bread is eaten in remembrance of the fact that as the Israelites fled Egypt they had to take unleavened bread with them.** It is a symbol of freedom from slavery and bondage, as well as a biblical symbol of purity and holiness as leaven represents sin in the bible. **Making preparations in Jesus day would require the home to be purged of all leaven. He instructed his disciple to do so.** The home was made holy and the table was set.

Jesus is our Passover Lamb. The picture of the unblemished lamb, slain to effectively cover the home with its blood so that death might pass over, is a picture of Him. As we look back on the Passover that He celebrated we can clearly see that history was orchestrated for that night, and that week. **Jesus sacrificed a Passover lamb, celebrated the Passover, was betrayed, crucified, and died Himself....our Passover Lamb, His blood atoning for the sin of many.** We can thank and praise God for His goodness to us!

Preparation for Passover Today

Preparing for Passover today is a bit more extended, elaborate, and complicated, than in the day of Jesus. Since there is no Temple, altar, or sacrifice, the Paschal lamb is not slain, and has not been since the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD. However, today the rabbis have instituted a much more elaborate system of preparation. The system or process for preparing for Passover in religious Jewish homes is called “cleaning out the chametz,” or “cleaning out the leaven.”

Because of rabbinical law, the process has become so cumbersome and elaborate that most Jewish people do not fully do it. It requires cleaning the house of all possible locations for bread or yeast products, including searching every page of every book in the house where crumbs might have fallen during reading. The refrigerator must be entirely scrubbed down and sterilized. The stove and oven must be sanitized. All dishes and silverware that have come into contact with bread or yeast must be put away. The dining room, kitchen, sinks, counters and floors must be scrubbed down with boiling water.

After the house is cleaned, all food products with leaven in them are boxed up and put in bags, and then taken out of the house.

Just prior to the Passover order of service (Seder) a special ceremony called "bedikat chametz" is conducted. **Using a candle, a feather, and a wooden spoon, the family looks around the house, searching for any leaven that might have been missed.** A small piece of leaven which is intentionally left in a corner of the home, is swept up with the feather into the wooden spoon, wrapped in the napkin, and burned in a fire. Symbolically, the home is completely purified for Passover. Only then will the house be ready for Passover.

As I watch the Orthodox Jewish community prepare for Passover I think of Jesus' words, "For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:30) Jesus warned the religious leaders of His day not to heap heavy burdens upon the people, yet, that is exactly what has happened. Removing the leaven from one's home is significant yet, we cannot allow, God does not want us to allow, ritual and tradition to blind us from the purpose of the Law which is to bring us deeper into a love relationship with Him.

Preparation for Us Today

Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread can be a time of preparation for us as well. As we prepare our hearts to celebrate the death and resurrection of Messiah it is important to evaluate our own lives. Every Sunday should be a celebration of the resurrection; yet, during special seasons we all become more reflective. It is only natural. **And so as the cold begins to dissipate, the days become warmer, and longer, we think about the renewal of life and the anticipation that comes along with it.**

Passover and Unleavened Bread, most importantly point us in the direction of Messiah. It is easy for us to celebrate communion and even the Resurrection, but miss Jesus in the midst of it all. We need to focus on Him, so that we don't miss Him. Remember, three days after Passover He rose from the dead!



Passover also gives us the opportunity to ponder our influence in the world around us. In the Passover Haggadah (the book containing the telling of the story of the Exodus) one of the first sayings recited by the family around the table is, *"Let all who are hungry come and eat."* **It is an invitation by Jewish people for those who don't know, who are unaware of the story of the Exodus, to come and share in the meal.** It is an invitation for those who have not seen, to see, and for those who are hungry to come and partake.

We read in John 6:35, "Then Jesus declared, *'I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.'*" **Those of us, who know the Passover Lamb Jesus, need to take the opportunity of the upcoming season to tell others about Him.** As we celebrate His death and resurrection, may our hearts and minds be focused on the need of the world to see Him.

Our ministry is here, doing just that, sharing Jesus with those in need. Thank you for standing with us as we take the message of Jesus to the Jewish people.

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Passover 2013

We will again be hosting our two ministry Passover events at Fellowship Bible Church in Roswell, GA on Tuesday and Friday night, March 19th and 22nd respectively. This is one week before Easter and Passover. Reservations for these two seders can be made through our ministry. We will have special music and Messianic dancing, a wonderful Passover meal, and go through the order of service around beautifully set tables at the church. Seating at the Fellowship seders will be limited to 200 per night. **Last year we sold out early and had a waiting list for both nights.**

Please invite your friends, Sunday school classes, small groups, and Jewish friends who do not yet know the Lord. **Reservations are necessary. Please see the enclosed flyer for more information.** If you are unable to attend one of those events, we are hosting several other Passover services in churches around metro Atlanta.

Other than the two services which our ministry is hosting at Fellowship Bible Church, each Passover seder is being organized by the individual churches. **A full list of Passover seders can be found on our web site.**

THANK YOU!

Thank you for helping us take Jesus back to the Jewish people. They have given us so much. They need Him.

Thank you, as well, for sending us out to the Jewish community with that message of peace and salvation in Jesus. May the Lord richly bless you!

In His service,

Murray Tilles...for the staff
 Light of Messiah Ministries