

The Newsletter/Parasha this week is shorter than during the regular weeks, because we are on Pesach and there is a break in the parasha reading.

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NEWS

CHAG PESACH SAMEACH HAPPY EASTER

This week is the week of Pesach, I hope that those who enjoy this festival have a nice time.

It is interesting to notice that this weekend (April 22-25) is the time of Christian Easter. Christians are celebrating the resurrection of Yehsua. He rose up from the death on the third day after the crucifixion, this day is commonly accepted as the first day of the week or Sunday. From time to time Easter and Passover are celebrated on the same week. To those for whom the resurrection day is important we wish a happy Easter and still Chag Pesach Sameach to our Jewish readers

TED'S COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR IN ISRAEL

Miroslav Pujic, Director of TED's Communication Department has been in Israel for few days on the Passover weekend. It was a privilege for us to participate to his seminars and training on Friday on Communications, on Sabbath afternoon on Internet ministries and Sunday he participated to the pastoral meetings and gave us very good thoughts about communications and Media Ministries.

On Friday evening he attended the celebration and kabbalat shabbat in the Beth Bnei Tzion synagogue in Jerusalem, and on Sabbath morning two congregations had the privilege to hear

his sermon, it was first the Russian speaking congregation in Tel Aviv and the congregation we have in Ramat Gan. I am sure that everyone enjoyed his visit and have a new vision on communication and Media Ministries (Internet, Radio, TV etc..)

HUGE EVANGELISTIC CAMPAIGN IN ISRAEL

We have been informed that the Evangelist David Hathaway has been invited by the Messianic congregations of Israel to hold three evangelistic meetings on the 28, 29 and 30 April in the big stadium of Tel Aviv. 4,000 people are expected each evening.

David Hathaway is living in the Philippines right now, he organizes a tour in Israel for about 10 days and in the evenings of these three days he will deliver an evangelist message on the 28th to the survivors of the Holocaust and on the 29th and 30th to the general population.

A friend from Geneva who is attending the meetings sent us an e-mail saying that we have to be ready to distribute our books to the audience, she asked for "Step to Christ" but we have not yet published this book in Hebrew and we are ready to distribute the Hebrew version of "Patriarchs and Prophets" we have published.

I read in Hathaway brochure "This is a very critical time for Israel. The Messianic Congregations in Israel have invited me to hold a 3 day Evangelistic Conference in the largest auditorium in Tel Aviv. Approximately 50 local congregations from 16 regions of the Holy Land are involved in the preparation for the outreach April 28-30. In addition to the main services, a special meeting is planned for thousands of Holocaust Survivors."

CHOL HAMOED PESACH

The Jewish people is celebrating this week the festival of Pesach, that is why the cycle of the parashot are interrupted and are not read on Sabbath. So I suggest you to focus on the meaning of the Passover feast for the Jewish people and for us. In the following remarks I give you some ideas about the Jewish celebration and the seder, which is the first meal on the first evening of the Passover week.

CALENDAR OF PASSOVER

According to the Jewish tradition, the way the Hebrew calendar is set, there are three nights in the week in which the first Seder cannot fall. Remember that a day in the Jewish tradition is from evening to evening. The first day of Pesach cannot be on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Knowing that all Jewish holidays begin with the night before, the first Seder cannot fall Sunday night, Tuesday night or Thursday night.

That is an argument to say that Yeshua who celebrated, according to the gospel, the Seder with his disciples on Thursday, did it one day before the regular day of the Jewish calendar.

If Thursday evening was the Seder evening for the Jewish people, it would have been impossible on that very day to arrest him, to meet the sanhedrin, to deliver him to the Romans for the trial, and to let the Romans crucify him on the first day of Pesach. It is impossible to imagine such a scenario. The truth is that Yeshua deliberately celebrated the Seder one day before the Jewish people, and was then arrested on that night, that means the day before the Passover, and died at the exact time of the Pesach sacrifice on "Erev Pesach". So all the Jewish people had their seder on Friday evening, and the day after was a double great Sabbath, first because it was the 7th-day of the week and because it was the Sabbath of the Passover. We then understand better why Yeshua did not want to break this great Sabbath and rested in the tomb until the end of the Shabbat and his resurrection was declared on the first day of the week, on Sunday.

NISSAN, THE FIRST MONTH

In the five Books of the Torah, the months are called by numbers. The calendar begins with Nissan which is called the "first month".

The Torah tells us that the holiday of Pesach (Passover) is celebrated on the fifteenth of the first month. Rosh Hashana (feast of the Trumpet) is on the first day of the seventh month and Yom Kippur (day of Atonement) on the tenth day of the seventh month. The reason that all the months are referred by number is also connected with the festival of Pesach and the Exodus. The word "Nissan" comes from the Hebrew word "Nes" which means "miracle". Indeed, this is a special month in which the greatest of all miracles took place for the Jewish people.

EGG AND BONE

What does the bone and hard boiled egg represent? At the time of the Beth HaMikdash (Holy Temple), Jews would offer two sacrifices in honor of the Passover holiday — the Pesach sacrifice ("Korban Pesach") and the Chagigah (festival) sacrifice ("Korban Chagigah"). The bone on the Seder plate recalls the Pesach sacrifice; the hard-boiled egg symbolizes the Chagigah sacrifice.

THE EGG

In the Jewish tradition, the egg is a symbol of mourning. Jewish Sages tell that at the time of joy, Jews must also remember the destruction of the Holy Temple. Jewish happiness is not complete without the Temple. Although Jews have gathered at the Seder table to rejoice and celebrate their freedom, at the same time, they also remember their Holy Temple and mourn its destruction.

SALT-WATER

What is the significance of the salt-water at the Seder? The salt-water is symbolic of the "tears" which the children of Israel shed as a result of their suffering during their enslavement in Mitzrayim-Egypt.

AFIKOMEN

At the beginning of the Seder we break the middle matzah. We then hide the bigger piece for the Afikoman, which we eat toward the end of the Seder. Why do we hide it?

The afikoman is for us Messianic Adventist Jews a representation of the Mashiach. As the Afikoman is broken, the Mashiach has been broken (killed). Then the Mashiach is symbolically hidden, it is not easy to find it, we have to make an effort to find him (spiritual

(prayer) and intellectual (Bible search) efforts). The involvement of the young children and their excitement in the Seder to search for it and to find it, is symbolically representing our involvement and excitation to look for the Mashiach, to find it and to receive the price for finding him.

THE FOUR SONS

The Haggadah read on the Seder speaks about 4 sons. 1) Wise son, 2) Wicked son, 3) Simple son, 4) The one who does not know to ask.

Each one has to ask a question, but the wise has the question and know the answer. The wicked does want to participate to this celebration in his question he uses he pronoun “You” instead of saying “We”. The Simple one ask very simple question, and the fourth son does not know what to ask, it is someone else who tell him which question to ask.

It is interesting to notice that when we read the Gospel, the gospel of John has a very long narrative about the Passover evening of Yeshua and his disciples. it takes from the chapter 13 to the chapter 17. We feel that John follows the order of the haggadah starting with the washing of the feet and finishing with the 4th cup and his priesthood prayer for his new people.

Reading carefully this gospel we discover the four sons, they are special character in the narration from John 13 to 17. The wise is Yeshua, he knows everything. The wicked is Judas, the one who does not participate to the seder and leave the room (John 13:30). The simple is Peter, who asks very innocent question (John 13:36) and the fourth one, the one who does not know what question to ask, is John himself. It is interesting that in the text of the gospel, John is there, he wants to ask a question, but does not know which question to ask and finally it is Peter who give to john his question. (John 13:24)

FOUR CUPS

What is the reason for drinking four cups of wine at the Seder? According to one opinion in the Talmud, they represent the four expressions of redemption (Exodus, 6:6-7) which G-d used regarding the liberation of the people of Israel from Egypt; “I will bring you out... I will deliver you... I will redeem you... I will take you to Me for a people...” We commemorate these four expressions of our freedom through the four cups of wine we drink at the Seder.

THE CUP YESHUA SHARED

The Cup Yeshua shared with his talmidim (disciples) was the fourth cup at the end of the meal which represent the cup of the covenant. The fourth verbs of Exodus 6:6-7 said “I will take you to Me for a people...” So Jesus took his disciples as the first members of his church, his people, he made a new covenant with them. However this covenant is in continuation with the covenants God made with Adam, Noah, Abraham, Israel in the time of Moses and David. It is the same covenant with the same terms and laws of the decalogue.

THE FIFTH CUP

The fifth cup at the Seder, the Cup of Elijah the Prophet, (who has to come to announce the coming of Mashiach), represents our deep belief that G-d sent us the redemption through Mashiach. The fifth cup is not drunk by anybody, we pour it out, but we don't drink it. Why? because only the Messiah can drink this cup. It is called also the cup of the wrath of G-d. Yeshua knew this cup, speaking to his disciples he said to them “You don't know what you are asking,” Jesus said to them. “Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?” (Matt 20:22). And after the Seder Yeshua went to a garden, and “Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.” (Matt 26:39), He suffered and knew that this cup was a cup of suffering, he knew that this night would be his last night, even though he did not like that, he accepted to give his life for us and prayed again but differently: “He went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.” (Matt 26:42). Yes this cup is announcing the glorious redemption given by the Mashiach, because he is the only one who can drink this cup in order to save us.

LESHANA HABA'A B'YERUSHALAYIM

May the Jewish prayer pronounced at the end of the seder “Lshana Haba'a B'Yerushalayim” — “Next year in Jerusalem,” be fulfilled this year to see the second coming of Mashiach who will introduce us to the heavenly Jerusalem — Amen