

Israel's OMessenger

Publishing Salvation to Zion - Isaiah 52:7
A ministry of Jewish Awareness Ministries



PASSOVER
Redemption



FIRSTFRUITS
Resurrection



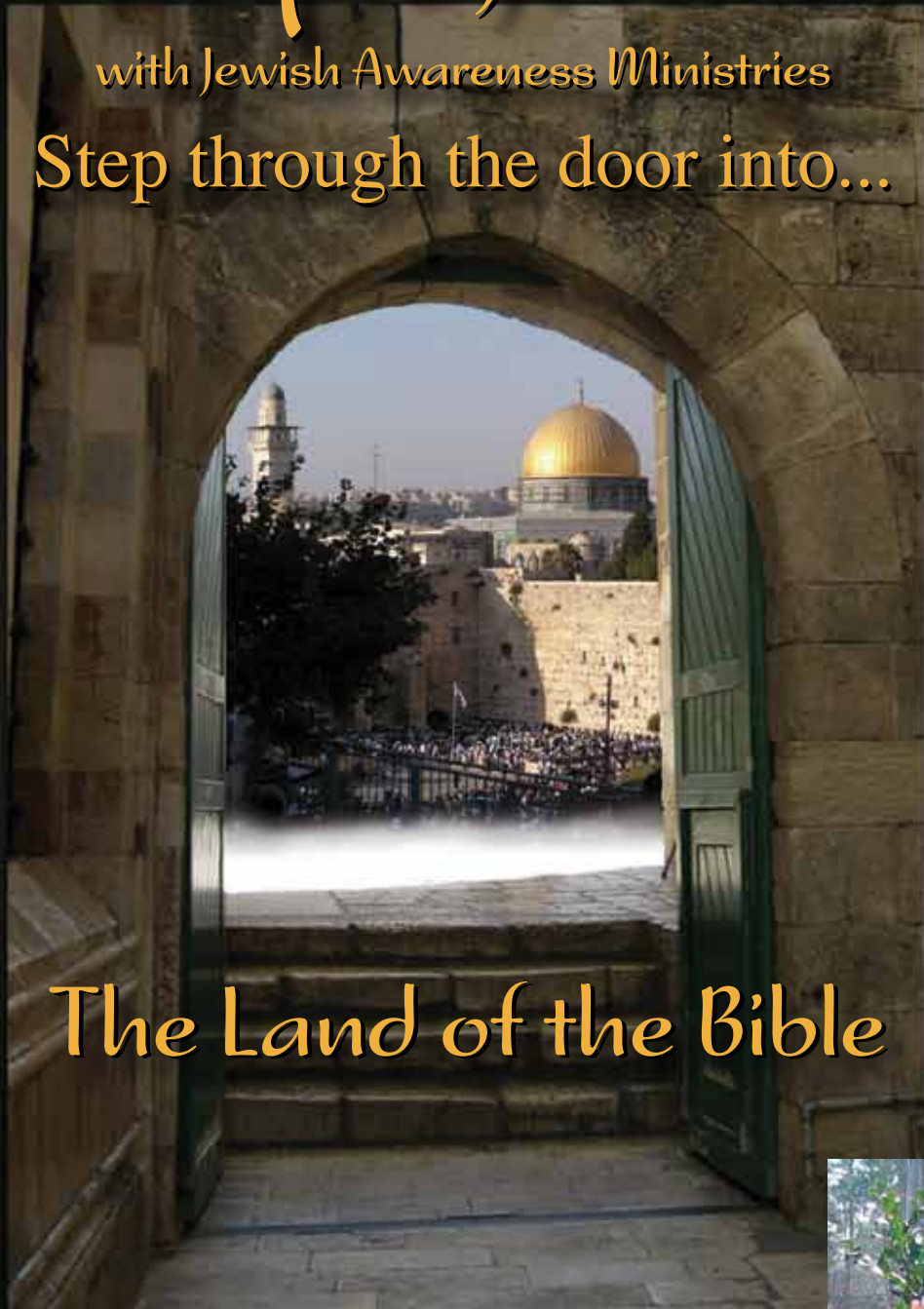
SHAVUOT
From Law to Grace



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For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof.
Psalm 102:14



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Mission Statement

Israel's Messenger is a quarterly publication of Jewish Awareness Ministries, a Christian ministry proclaiming the Messiah to Jew and Gentile, preaching the Word of God, and praying for Israel.

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by Mark Robinson



Cover: Passover, First Fruits, and Shavuot are tied together and through them we see God's redemptive plan through Messiah, Messiah's resurrection, and the liberation of believers from Law to Grace.



From the Director's Desk

Dear Friends,

Just before Thanksgiving I received news from Israel that Moshe Gold had a stroke. Moshe is a godly man, well respected, a contributing writer to Israel's Messenger, and an excellent representative for the LORD and Jewish Awareness Ministries in Israel. I have written the column Apples of Gold this month explaining what happened. Please pray for Moshe's recovery and for Shoshana to have God's strength and grace during this time.

Seven years ago Israel's Messenger was first printed in a magazine format with a new masthead and some new columns. With the first issue of this year the look of Israel's Messenger is changing. We have a new masthead and the main articles are now laid out in three columns instead of two. I hope you like the changes.

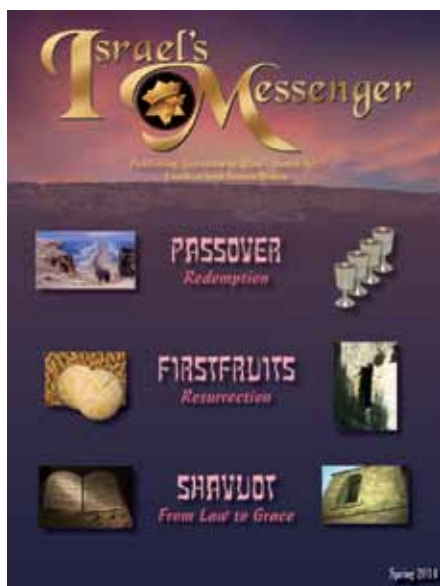
For you who live in the Raleigh, NC area, Jewish Awareness Ministries will be hosting two Hebrew-Christian Passover Seders this year in our new building. They are scheduled for Monday, April 14 and Tuesday, April 15. They will start at 6:30 p.m. and end at 9:30 p.m. The evening will include a full dinner, insights into the Passover showing Jesus in the Passover, and wonderful fellowship. Tickets are \$12.00 for adults and \$5.00 for children under 10 years of age. Seating is limited, so purchase your tickets soon. Contact Jewish Awareness Ministries for more information.

This issue of Israel's Messenger highlights the spring feasts of Israel. Dan Bergman has written an article on Passover and the 4 Cups of Wine. The article is insightful and challenging. Be sure to read it.

Our newest Field Representative Appointee, Ken Overby, has written an article about the Feast of Firstfruits. This neglected feast is very important for believers and what it represents. Ken has some interesting thoughts on why this feast is neglected by the Jewish community. Pray for Ken as he raises support in his service for

our Lord through Jewish Awareness Ministries. If you would like to support Ken, send in the monies to Jewish Awareness Ministries and designate it for Overby support. If you would like Ken to come to your church to present his ministry, contact us about this.

I have written an article on Shavuot, as the Jewish people refer to it, or Pentecost, as Christians commonly know this day.



The Jewish people celebrate Shavuot as the time of the giving of the law to Israel. Christians celebrate this day as the birth of the church. There are similarities and contrasts in these understandings of this day that will encourage and challenge you.

Our next Journey to Jerusalem tour is scheduled for October 22 - 31, 2014. We have been able to get some exceptional prices for this tour. We will be leaving from Newark Airport on this 10 day tour and the price is \$3,290. We have also been able to arrange travel from Raleigh, NC and Los Angeles, CA at the price of \$3,390. These prices are lower than in previous years and we have also upgraded some of our hotels. The Raleigh and Los

Angeles price requires a minimum of 10 travelers from each airport. Join us for an exceptional tour at an exceptional price. We may never be able to get such a low price for such a great trip again. We have limited availability so reserve your place now.

The weekend of May 16-17, 2014 we will be hosting Jewish Evangelism Training at our headquarters. We will start on Friday evening with dinner and conclude on Saturday with dinner. There will be many hours of teaching, delicious meals, and great fellowship. See page 13 for additional information. There is a charge for this weekend, but we provide many materials for your benefit and all the meals. There is a motel about 5 minutes from our headquarters if you come from out of the area. Call us to register for this weekend of training. You will benefit from being with us.

We are now able to offer many different programs to groups at our new facility. We can provide lunch or dinner as part of the program if desired. Some of the topics we offer are Christ in the Passover presentation, Understanding the Israel and Palestinian Conflict, Christ in the Day of Atonement, Jewish Culture and the New Testament, Israel in Prophecy, as well as many others. Each presentation lasts from 45 minutes to an hour. If you would like to schedule a time, week day or night or on a Saturday, for your Sunday school class, home school group, senior ministries, or other, please contact us to discuss the possibilities.

Every year brings us closer to the return of the Lord. Perhaps 2014 will be the time of His coming for His church. Wouldn't that be great! May God find you faithful serving Him this year because this may be the year He comes!

In Messiah,

Mark Robinson



Passover and the Four Cups

by Rev. Dan Bergman



Trying to fully grasp the modern Passover can be an intimidating task to any believer who has not experienced the unique perspective of a Jewish upbringing. Although of Jewish heritage on my father's side, like many "Samaritans", I was raised in a church-going home. I had no inkling of what it was like to be brought up Jewish. My father's experience with the synagogue didn't extend beyond his childhood. A few years after my salvation as a teenager, I headed off to Bible College in order to prepare for the ministry the Lord had called me to. By the spring of my junior year, I had become part of a small group of students who were interested in Jewish ministry. Then came the question. "Hey, you've got a Jewish background, right? Could you lead us in a Passover Seder?"



"You're kidding, right?" was my thought.

Sure enough, no one was kidding. Like any young preacher-boy, I whole-heartedly stepped up to the plate (although I had no idea what I was doing). One of the students gave me a *Haggadah* (literally "showing forth") that shows the Passover from a Jewish-Christian perspective. This small booklet was the order of service for the Passover Seder.

Upon returning to my dorm room, with a very small window of time with which to acquaint myself with this ancient Jewish feast, I began thumbing through the Haggadah like a student "cramming" for finals. My pace soon slowed as I began to discover the deep meanings behind this incredible night. One of the greatest discoveries I made that day, was that of the meaning of the four cups of wine.

Four Cups of Wine

During the Seder, the cup of each participant is filled, and drank four separate times. I found that each of these cups, with their own order, blessing, and name, symbolize a part of God's four-fold promise of redemption found in Exodus 6:6, 7.

"Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians." (Emphasis added)

The tradition of the four cups of wine were not in place when the Hebrew slaves experienced the first Passover, but it was definitely practiced by the first century.



Cup 1: Sanctification

After the lighting of the candles and the blessing that corresponds, the command to keep the Passover is read from Exodus 12 - then comes the first cup, the cup of sanctification. Ask most Bible-believing Christians what sanctification means, and you will likely receive a response along the lines of "being made holy" or "set-aside." That would also be true of this cup. The cup does not make us holy, or separate, but rather, it sets aside this night as special. It characterizes this night as different from all other nights of the year. None of the meanings of these cups should be derived apart from the main event of the first Passover - the slaying of the lamb, and the spreading of his blood on the door posts to stay the Lord's hand from taking the life of the first-born within that house. That was a very special night - as was the night in which our Lord was betrayed. In that same night, He and His disciples celebrated this historic event. It was set apart. As the promise stated, "I will bring you out". God would separate His people from the Egyptians through the Passover. The Lord sanctifies those who know Him as Lord and Savior from those who do not. As

Hebrews states, "...we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."¹

Cup 2: Praise

The second cup comes much later in the Seder. It is known as the cup of Praise, or *Hallel*. It can be found just after the reading of Psalms 113 and 114 in what is known as the *Hallel*. The participants are encouraged to praise the Lord for what He has done through the Passover. This cup corresponds to the phrase "I will rid you out of their bondage."² One may ask, "Isn't that the same thing as bringing you out from under their burdens?"

Well, no. The Lord wouldn't have said it the way that He did, if it was supposed to mean the exact same thing as the first promise. It is similar, but carries with it an amazing truth. The first promise was to be brought out from under their burdens. You and I were born sinners. Through our life we carried a burden, a load of sin with its guilt and consequences on our shoulders. Through salvation, the Lord has brought us out from under that load - but that's not all He did. Are we in bondage anymore? No!

*"Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."*³

That is the point of this second cup, and our reason to praise Him! We are not simply out from under the burden of sin, but He has rid us of its bondage! Praise the Lord!

Cup 3: Redemption

Following the meal, and the breaking of bread (which is referred to as the *Afikomen*), the third cup is poured. What is special about this cup?



If one would search the Gospel account of the Lord's Supper, they would find that the

Afikomen was signified by Jesus to symbolize His body, the wine of this, the third cup, His blood. This is the cup of Redemption.

This cup in its origin was based upon the phrase from Exodus 6, "I will redeem you." As we read in the above mentioned Galatians passage, the primary role of the Messiah was to redeem. God told Moses to tell the Children of Israel, "וּגְאֹלְתִי אֶתְכֶם" (and I will redeem you). The Hebrew verb *ga'l* "to redeem" literally means to reclaim as one's own.⁴ The Lord was reclaiming ownership of His people from Pharaoh and the Egyptian taskmasters. He brought them out of slavery through the Passover.

Mankind, Jews and Gentiles alike, are in bondage and are under a curse. That curse holds a tighter grip on humanity than Pharaoh and his armies ever could. It is the curse of sin, of imperfection, of falling short of God's standard of holiness. The Law, although perfect and good, only amplified this imperfection. Like a powerful microscope to cancerous tissue, the Law pinpoints our problem. We need redemption.

When Jesus raised that third cup, He said "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."⁵

With that statement Jesus made an incredible connection between an event that took place 1,400 years before His birth and a prophecy that was penned 600 years before. The event was the Passover. The prophecy was from Jeremiah.

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: but this shall be the covenant that

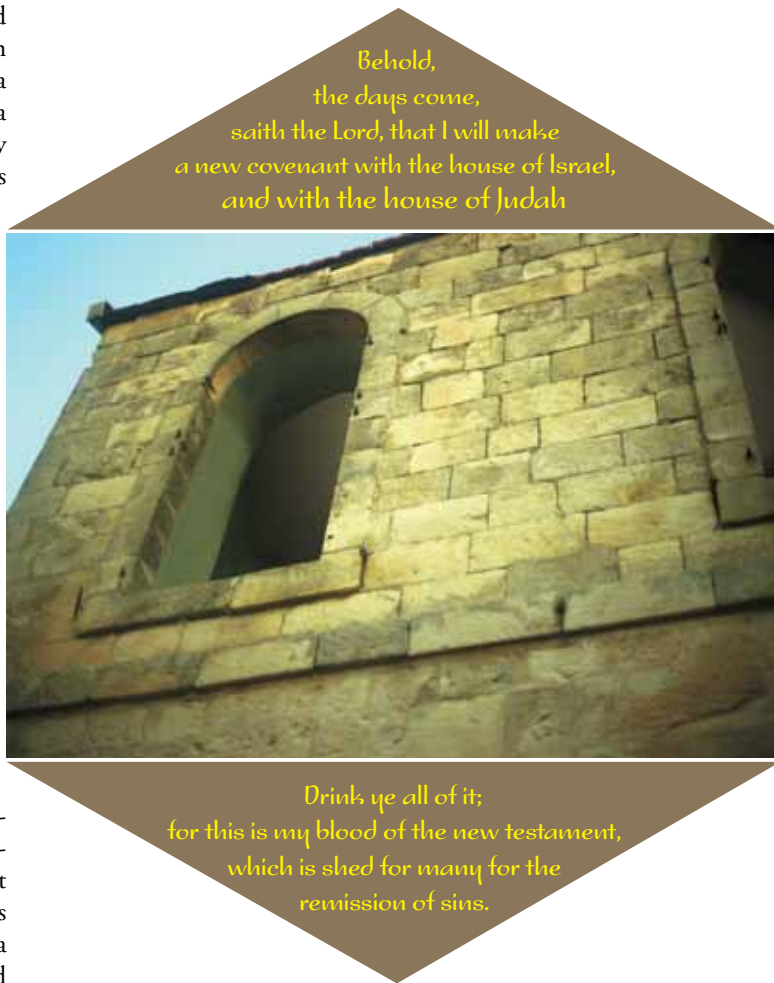
I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Jeremiah 31:31-34 (emphasis added)

When Jesus made that statement in the upper room, He equated His own blood with that of the Paschal lamb. It was His blood that would make possible all of the promises of Jeremiah 31. The average

Passover Seder, the cup of Acceptance. The phrase that this cup is based on "I will take you to me for a people,"⁶ interestingly parallels a phrase from the New Covenant prophecy in Jeremiah "(I) will be their God, and they shall be my people."⁷ Although the literal fulfillment of this exact prophecy in its context leads us to Zechariah 12:10 and 13:9, where Israel sees Jesus at His second coming, and accepts Him as their Messiah, one cannot deny the fact that believers are now "accepted in the beloved."⁸ Nor can we ignore the passage in which Peter stated that "ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God."⁹ This cup is quite possibly the cup Jesus referred to when he told His disciples that He would not drink of it until He was with them again in His Father's kingdom.¹⁰

Conclusion

As nervous as I may have been in leading the first Seder I had ever been to, I was greatly calmed by the incredible truths that I found in my study of the four cups. Everything went as it was supposed to, and I was greatly blessed by the rich connections between the first Passover in Egypt, and the Passover celebrated by our Savior the very night He was arrested, to shortly thereafter shed His own blood as our Passover. May Passover, with Christ as THE Passover Lamb, also be your blessing!



Behold,
the days come,
saith the Lord, that I will make
a new covenant with the house of Israel,
and with the house of Judah

Drink ye all of it;
for this is my blood of the new testament,
which is shed for many for the
remission of sins.

Christian may read Jesus' statement from Matthew 26, and conclude that this was simply the institution of the Lord's Supper as a memorial. It was certainly that, but **so much more!** This was the culmination and connection of centuries of tradition, prophecy, and hope. This was redemption, and it all centered around the third cup.

Cup 4: Acceptance

There remains yet one last cup in the

End Notes

- 1 Hebrews 10:10
- 2 Exodus 6:6
- 3 Galatians 4:3-5
- 4 William Lee Holladay and Ludwig Kohler, A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 52.
- 5 Matthew 26:27-28
- 6 Exodus 6:7
- 7 Jeremiah 31:33
- 8 Ephesians 1:6
- 9 1 Peter 2:9-10
- 10 Matthew 26:29

Feast of Firstfruits

by Rev. Ken Overby



Mark it on your calendars now. The Feast of First Fruits is April, 19-20. But don't get your hopes up that the local party store will be stocked up for the celebration. I doubt your neighborhood Judaica store will either. But if you have the "chutzpah" to ask them why they have no supplies for one of the three required pilgrimages to Jerusalem for Jewish males, or why this holiday is the least emphasized feast in Judaism, brace yourself for a weird look and don't expect to be referred to a Rabbi for answers. If you are still not to be deterred, try the modern tree of knowledge - the mega book store. Not that you will find anything but an awkward response when you ask one of their, twenty something "associates" to download a volume about first fruits to your "Kindle". They may think you are speaking Hebrew. Do yourself a favor. Just buy one of their designer coffees and move on to the Bible section, because that's where the origin, symbolism and the fulfillment is explained. But even there in Leviticus, only a few verses are to be found. So where else have we learned to turn for information in this smart phone world? Google it. But not even "Wikipedia," which is American for "plethora" of information, has much on the subject. But to top it off, the one paragraph describing this festival concluded that it was the basis for the modern "African American Holiday, Kwanzaa." Seriously!? Finally I clicked on a Wikipedia tab labeled Hebrew Perspective. That's what we are looking for. Now the Internet may be the source of truth for many low information Bible students, but we have to look back a little farther than Kwanzaa 1966 for a genuine Hebrew perspective.

Before we delve into Leviticus chapter 23, let's look at modern Judaism's lack of emphasis on this feast. The vast majority of information that I found barely mentioned it and moved on to Shavuot. Pentecost, as Christians call Shavuot, is often called the Feast of Weeks because they were instructed to have a harvest festival seven weeks after the Feast of First Fruits. Pentecost simply indicates a period of fifty days. Why is First Fruits almost non-existent when it comes to

Passover, the most widely observed family oriented feast in Jewish history. Its placement on the next day made it rather anti-climactic. In addition to being placed the day after the Passover Lamb was killed, First Fruits was on the first day of the 7 day Feast of Unleavened Bread. It was sandwiched between two widely observed events in the Mosaic calendar of Judaism. There was also a delayed inauguration of this feast. From the time the instructions about this feast were written until it was observed in the promised land, more than 40 years expired. Farm land, planting, sprouting, then harvest are all requirements that couldn't be met in the desert. Once in the land they were to offer to the Lord the first green heads of barley that had sprouted equaling about two quarts. A lamb was to be offered as a whole burnt offering. About two pints of wine were to be poured out before the Lord. Also flour mingled with oil was to be burned as a sweet incense to the Lord, and then, and only then, could they eat new parched grain. This consecrated the entire harvest yet to come to the Lord. It was kind of a faith promise offering, giving Him the first and trusting Him to supply the rest.

But the main reason for the insignificance of this Feast is not that heaven over booked holidays. We

are wont to say when we find ourselves burning the candle at both ends, "Who planned this?" God did. Then why? He must have had a reason for back to back feasts. But double lamb sacrifices? That's right. The day after slain and roast Paschal Lamb was the entree' they were told to bring a *"he lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt*



modern Jewish observance? The answer can be found in the Jewish context of the conflict that developed between the first century Jewish believers and Jewish unbelievers.

A close look at Leviticus 23 gives a clue as to why this feast had an uphill battle for recognition. To begin with, it lacked visibility due to its proximity to

Continued on page 8

offering unto the LORD," Leviticus 23:12. Rather than being consumed at a feast, this lamb was to be totally consumed in the fire. But since the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD, neither can a lamb be eaten at Passover nor can one be offered as a burnt offering. With no temple, altar, priesthood, or state of Israel for almost 1900 years, there was also no harvesting the land. Nationally and agriculturally the feast all but disappeared. It has been reduced to a mere starting date that begins a count down to Shavuot in modern Judaism. But did it diminish before 70 AD and for what reasons?

Was there another reason that First Fruits went out of vogue in the first century? I believe there is. It has much to do with what this festival was a type of. This feast was ordained by God to be a type of the greatest victory of His story in the future battle of the "seed". Just three chapters into Genesis we read of the prophecy of the seed of the woman who would defeat Satan as one would crush the head of a serpent. In the process, the seed of the woman, according to Isaiah, would be "wounded", "bruised" and "cut off" indicating suffering and death. Messiah would die with the wicked, yet prolong His life, Isaiah 53:9-11. Passover was to be immediately followed by the symbol of new life – First Fruits. Jesus was born as the seed of a virgin in Bethlehem and died on a cross. They buried Him on the eve of Passover. Like First Fruits follows Passover, His resurrection followed His death as the Lamb of God. Fifty days later on the Feast Day of Pentecost, the Apostle Peter preached the gospel of Jesus and 3000 accepted Jesus as their Messiah.

In rapid succession three feasts in seven weeks during the spring of 30 AD, became dominated by a mass movement of Jewish disciples of the resurrected Jesus. The Apostles were called before the panicked Sanhedrin, and were threatened, beaten and forbidden time and again from preaching Jesus as the Messiah, Acts 4:10-22; 5:40-42. Yet as they were threatened the movement grew exponentially. The elders said "you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine and intend to bring this man's blood upon us," Acts 5:28.

One of the great Rabbis of the first Century, Saul of Tarsus, later codified what this burgeoning movement had

been proclaiming. After meeting the Messiah Jesus and after studying the Tenach - Hebrew Scriptures - for two years, Saul, also known as Paul the Apostle wrote; "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept... Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming," 1 Corinthians 15:20-23. Jesus alone fulfilled messianic prophecy and rose from the dead as proof that a greater harvest of resurrection is in store for all those who receive forgiveness of sin and eternal life through faith in Him. By the time he penned these words the New Testament records that over 8000 thousand Jews in Jerusalem had believed on Jesus as Messiah Savior, Acts 2:41: 4:4, including a great company of Priests who believed on Jesus, Acts 6:7. By the ninth chapter of Acts there were multiple assemblies of believers throughout Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria. Can you imagine the scenario in the Jewish communities the next year when these triple holy days rolled around? Great multitudes of Israelites who had believed the gospel of the resurrected Jesus now celebrated these Jewish feasts declaring Him as the Passover lamb, the First Fruit of their resurrection, and the giver of the Holy Spirit to a harvest of souls at Pentecost. No more did those feasts foreshadow a lamb to atone for sins or a first grain offering to project a coming harvest or a Pentecost to symbolize an ingathering of agriculture. All of those types were fulfilled by Jesus. Could the waving of the barley sheaves in celebration of Jesus victory over death and the demonstration of their joyous expectation of their resurrection have been a sore reminder? Every year unbelieving Jewish relatives and neighbors were reminded that Jesus of Nazareth was handed over to the Romans for death by Israel's leaders. Every year it was a reminder that Jesus arose in a glorified body as they watched their Jewish friends, sons and daughters wave their sheaves of grain in praise to God, declaring that Jesus is the First Fruit of eternal life. The implication of this inconvenient proof was undeniable. We read of the elders prohibiting the disciples from speaking in Jesus' name, Acts 5:25-28. It would not be out of the realm of possibility that the celebration of the Feast was censored by the elders, John 9:22; 12:42. These object les-

sons, supernaturally fulfilled by Jesus of Nazareth, presented an inconvenient proof annually to the Jewish feast goers who heard the proclamation of His followers accompanied by undeniable miracles of the Holy Spirit.

Many times we have seen a football team just feet from the goal line fumble the ball only to have victory snatched away by the opposing team. But in this case the ball that was fumbled by the elders of Israel was recovered by their own teammates. Unlearned fishermen, converted tax collectors, and sinners picked up the message of salvation through Jesus and passed it on to thousands of their Jewish brethren in the stands. They in turn passed the ball on to Jews and Gentiles alike. Now we Gentile beneficiaries of the Jewish Messiah must not forfeit the opportunity to pass the ball back to Jewish people as we approach the goal line of Christ's return in the Rapture. The end zone of the Tribulation, foretold by Daniel the prophet, will mean almost complete destruction of the inhabitants of Israel by the Anti-Christ before Jesus comes down to earth. We must reach them with the gospel because many will not survive that time. Jesus will deliver the small Jewish remnant that remains by grace. They will then rule and reign with Jesus their Messiah as He sits on the throne of David in Jerusalem bringing peace on earth. We who are saved in this age of Grace will be resurrected and enjoy the Kingdom of Heaven on earth with our Lord and His brethren!

We need to pray for and communicate these God ordained object lessons in the feasts of Israel. Because there is a Passover Lamb and a first born of resurrection, there can be an ingathering of souls if we will be His witnesses to them of the Jewish Messiah who is Jesus the Lord. In the Tribulation period, due to the preaching of this gospel by two Jewish prophets and the 144,000 Jewish evangelists, an innumerable multitude will respond in faith. We may be witnessing to the very ones who will later be saved and be the first fruits of that great final harvest.

"These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb," Revelation 14:4.



Feast of Shavuot

by Rev. Mark Robinson



“**A**nd ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD. Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; they are the firstfruits unto the LORD. And ye shall offer with the bread seven lambs without blemish of the first year, and one young bullock, and two rams: they shall be for a burnt offering unto the LORD, with their meat offering, and their drink offerings, even an offering made by fire, of sweet savour unto the LORD. Then ye shall sacrifice one kid of the goats for a sin offering, and two lambs of the first year for a sacrifice of peace offerings. And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits for a wave offering before the LORD, with the two lambs: they shall be holy to the LORD for the priest. And ye shall proclaim on the selfsame day, that it may be an holy convocation unto you: ye shall do no servile work therein: it shall be a statute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations. And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger: I am the LORD your God.” Leviticus 23:15-22

Shavuot, or Pentecost, is the third of the required feasts of the Lord found in Leviticus 23. There are a variety of names that the

Scriptures give to this feast. “Feast of Weeks”, Exodus 34:22; Deuteronomy 16:10; “Feast of Harvest”, Exodus 23:16, and “Day of the First Fruits”, Numbers 28:26.

It is the only festival that does not have a fixed date. The dating is from “the next day after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days”, Leviticus 23:16. During New Testament times the lack of a fixed date for this feast resulted in differing opinions on when the beginning of the count should take place.

The Sadducees, generally wealthy members of the Jewish aristocracy who had embraced Hellenism, were the Temple custodians. They numbered about 3,000 at the time of Jesus. According to Josephus, in the 107 years from the beginning of Herod’s reign in 37 B.C. to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., there were 28 high priests. The Talmud records that by the time of Jesus, the high priest bought the office from the government and the position was changed every year. These policies resulted in a group of wealthy Sadducean priestly families being appointed to the office on a regular basis. They understood the Sabbath to refer to the first Saturday of Passover; thus, the counting was to begin on the first Sunday, always putting Pentecost on a Sunday.

The Pharisees generally came from the middle class, were zealous for the Mosaic Law, and were the “party” of the people. At the time of Jesus they numbered about 6,000. They interpreted Sabbath not to mean Saturday but the first day of the rest (the first day of the Passover Festival). The counting would begin on the second

day of the Passover Festival and Pentecost could fall on any day. The Pharisees method became the generally accepted method and is used today among the Jewish people.

The Christian dating of Pentecost is the seventh Sunday after Resurrection Day (Easter). This view lines up with the Sadducee view of it always falling on a Sunday.

The lack of a specific date for this festival is seen by Jewish authorities, with the initial counting from Passover to Shavuot, as a continuous link or flow of the first three festivals. The understanding is that they are intrinsically linked together.

This festival’s purpose was initially agricultural. After the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. Shavuot took on an historical basis for its celebration. Based on Exodus 19:1, this festival became the celebration of the giving of the Mosaic law. It became customary for the book of Ruth to be read in celebration of this feast.

It seems as though God providentially brought together a number of things to bring us some fascinating insights into this feast day and the work of Israel’s Messiah. Three insights for our brief consideration are the concept of the Kinsman-Redeemer and its relationship to Messiah Jesus in the book of Ruth, the beginning of the church on the very day of Shavuot (Pentecost), and the contrast we see between law and grace in relation to Shavuot.

Kinsman Redeemer

Today the reading of the book of Ruth accompanies the celebration of this Festival. This practice probably started sometime in the 2nd century of this era.

<p>PASSOVER / PESACH Liberation from bondage (Exodus 12)</p>  <p>Jewish Interpretation</p> <p>Liberation from bondage of sin (1 Corinthians 5:7)</p>  <p>Christian Application</p>	<p>FIRST FRUITS / BIKKURIM Unto</p>  <p>Unto</p> 	<p>SHAVUOT / PENTECOST Law - Israel (Exodus 19:1-7)</p>  <p>Grace (John 1:17, Romans 6:14, Acts 2)</p> 
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The book of Ruth and the kinsman/redeemer are intrinsically tied together. To not understand the kinsman/redeemer teaching is to miss the thrust of the book and the pictures the book of Ruth provides us of the relationship of Jesus and the church. The book is a love story between a Gentile woman, a Jewish man, and the God of Israel.

Boaz, a relative or kinsman of Elimelech, Ruth 2:1, Naomi's deceased husband, wanted to fulfill his obligation as a kinsman redeemer and raise up a family for Ruth. Ruth had married Mahlon, one of the sons of Elimelech and Naomi, and he had died also, Ruth 4:10.

Boaz was following the Mosaic command found in Deuteronomy 25:5-6.

"If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her. And it shall be, that the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel." Deuteronomy 25:5-6

There were three requirements to be able to fulfill the requirements of a kinsman/redeemer. First, he must be the nearest kin (relative). Boaz was not the nearest qualifying relative, so he asked the nearest relative if he would marry Ruth in fulfilling the law. He was not willing, Ruth 4:1-6, and Boaz then became the nearest relative.

The second qualification was the ability to fulfill the obligation. Initially, Boaz did not have the ability to perform the obligation because of the nearer relative. When the nearer relative passed on his obligation, Boaz then qualified, and had the ability to fulfill the obligation, Ruth 4:8-11.

The third requirement was being willing to fulfill the obligation. Ruth 4 clearly shows how willing Boaz was to fulfill the obligation. Boaz met every requirement of the kinsman/redeemer. He took unto him Ruth as his wife, and through their marriage was born Obed, the father of Jesse and David, Ruth 4:13-17. This gentile woman would be in the Messianic line!

Jesus is our kinsman/redeemer as He met all three requirements. Not only was He our nearest kin, Hebrews 2:14, but He was able to fulfill the obligation of the kinsman/redeemer in that He was able to redeem us, 1 Peter 1:18-19, and He was

willing also, John 10:17-18.

For the festival of Shavuot the book of Ruth is read in the synagogue telling the glorious story of the love of a Jewish man for a Gentile woman as he followed the God of Israel's desires. It is no coincidence that at the festival of Shavuot (Pentecost), a Jewish man, Jesus, and ultimately, primarily, a Gentile bride, the church, were brought together, in the birth of the church. This too is a love story of a Jewish man for His Bride!



Birth of the Church

The birth of the Church took place on Pentecost and is recorded in Acts 2:1-4. Part of the offering to God on this feast day were "two wave loaves...baked with leaven," Leviticus 23:17. Typically offerings contained no leaven; yet this did.

Leaven, at times, is used in the Bible as a picture of sin. For example:

"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." 1 Corinthians 5:7-8

The picture is clear. The church is made up of redeemed, but still sinful, Jews and Gentiles. The church, redeemed Jews and Gentiles ("two loaves"), are an "offering to the Lord," Romans 12:1-2.

In the plan of God, the church was born on the feast of Shavuot! What a beautiful fulfillment of this feast, especially when one considers that, in the providence of God, the book of Ruth is the biblical focal point in the synagogue today.

Law and Grace

Shavuot brings out the contrast of law and grace better than any other feast day. Jewish people celebrate Shavuot as the time

of the giving of the Law by God, through Moses, to the nation of Israel. When the Law was given on Sinai, shortly thereafter, we are told, "there fell of the people that day about 3,000 men," Exodus 32:28.

The law can only bring death, Romans 3:19-20, Galatians 3:10. There is no possible redemption or spiritual life in the Law because of our sinfulness, Romans 3. In a very vivid way, God showed the curse of the law, Deuteronomy 27:26, by accompanying its giving with the death of 3,000 people.

In contrast, when the church was begun, the blessing of grace is shown in that we are told that, shortly thereafter, "...the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls", Acts 2:41. Grace brings life, Ephesians 2:8-9.

Three thousand died at the giving of the law. Three thousand lived, spiritually, at the birth of the church.

Along with the law at Sinai, God gave Moses instructions for the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle is a portrait of Jesus. A picture of how one finds grace through the Messiah. Many books have been written on "Christ in the Tabernacle." These show the many parallels of the Tabernacle and Jesus, and how the Tabernacle pictures the grace we find only in Jesus, the Messiah.

Shavuot stands as the background of the proclamation, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," John 1:17!

Conclusion

The feast of Shavuot when seen in light of Pentecost and the accompanying Jewish traditions challenge each of us in a number of areas. Law, grace, church, spiritual life vs. death are just some.

With no fixed date for Shavuot, the Christian application is we have been liberated, redeemed, from the bondage of sin through the Passover, Jesus the Lamb, 1 Corinthians 5:7, unto resurrection through Christ as our Firstfruits, 1 Corinthians 15:20-23, and new life in Messiah, 1 Corinthians 15:20,22-23, 2 Corinthians 5:17, and by grace brought into the family of God with the birth of the Church at Pentecost, John 1:17, Romans 6:14, Acts 2.

Have you celebrated the feast of Shavuot in a spiritual sense? In light of the above shouldn't you, by faith, accept the Messiah as your Savior and Lord? When you do this, you will truly appreciate the feast of Shavuot/Pentecost!



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at our headquarters in
Willow Spring, NC

Friday, May 16 &
Saturday, May 17, 2014

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- ✧ Jewish history
- ✧ Messianic prophecy
- ✧ Isaiah 53
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- ✧ Plan of salvation in the O.T.
- ✧ Questions and Answers
of Jewish People.

*"And beginning
at Moses and
all the prophets,
he expounded unto them
in all the scriptures
the things concerning himself."
Luke 24:27*



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Sowing the Seed . . . Reaping the Harvest

God's Awesome Timing

By Jeff and Arlene Berg

When we begin the day, we always pray to be in the center of God's perfect will. We always want to spend serious time in prayer before walking the streets of the Jewish community. This is very important, because it is God's business. Over and over we see God answer this prayer. He will bring us into the path of someone who needs to be reached. We could be waiting at the traffic light and look across the street, and "Look! There's Joe the barber!" A good spiritual conversation would arise, and you walk away feeling really blessed. "Wow! Was that timing! It was God's timing."

Recently, a wonderful testimony of the Lord's leading left us in awe. We were in the Squirrel Hill business district and visited some of our merchant friends. While we were there, we stopped in the local grocery store. When we were leaving the store, "Lo and behold," here comes Doctor Paul walking into the grocery store. He looked very distinguished, a man 95 years old looking more like 75, very well dressed, wearing a sharp sport coat like he just came out of the office.

We have known Doctor Paul for over 20 years. Arlene was a patient of his, along with an area pastor, who has continually shared the gospel with him over the years. Also, Doctor Paul and his wife, along with his colleague, Doctor Marshall, and his wife, attended our first Pittsburgh evangelistic banquet in 1991, where they heard David Levy of The Friends of Israel speak.

As we were walking out of the store, Doctor Paul said, "What are you doing here? What a surprise to see you both!" We reminisced about his coming to the banquet years ago and his pastor friend. We shared about our volunteering at the Jewish home. Doctor Paul responded with a smile and a gleam in his eyes, "You two do so many good things." We shared that it is our faith in Jesus that has changed us. The doctor asked, "How has Jesus changed you? Jesus lived 2,000 years ago!" His question gave us the opportunity to share our testimonies of salvation. In the meantime, customers were walking by us in every direction with their noisy grocery carts. Also in close proximity, Miriam, an Ultra-Orthodox Jewish woman wearing an old head scarf, was sitting at a card table giving out literature on how the Gentiles can usher in the Messiah. Here was God's still small voice of the gospel reaching into the heart of this needy man in the midst of the business of life. Here was the Light of life penetrating the doctor's heart as Miriam was pitching the darkness of rabbinic Judaism. We responded to the doctor and said, "But, He is alive and is living in us." Then Doctor Paul responded with a resounding, "YES! He is living in our hearts and minds." We were astounded by his answer. We responded saying, "That is the answer!" We parted ways. Several days later, we discussed our visit with Doctor Paul with his pastor friend. The pastor shared with us that he seems to think that the doctor believes.



To Israel With Love

By Mark Robinson

This was one trip to Israel that I didn't want to make. A few days earlier I heard that Moshe Gold had a stroke and was in ICU. My trip to Israel, because of the severity of the stroke, was to encourage Shoshana at this time and visit Moshe in the hospital.

Through the owner of the tour company we use for our Israel tours it was arranged for a driver to pick me up at Ben Gurion airport near Tel Aviv and take me to my hotel in Tiberias, close to where the Gold's live. Yehudah, the driver, knew Moshe but had not seen him recently.

As we were driving to Tiberias, I shared with Yehudah about Moshe's stroke. He was shocked as he had not heard about the stroke, having just seen him a couple of weeks earlier, and knew him to be in excellent health. This led to a conversation about Moshe's and my beliefs about Jesus as Messiah.

The conversation started when Yehudah asked me, "Do you attend Beth Knesset?" Beth Knesset means Assembly House. I wasn't sure if Yehudah was asking me do I attend synagogue or church - both being houses of assembly. After considering his question momentarily, I decided he was asking me if I attended synagogue. When I told him, "No, I don't attend synagogue," correctly discerning his question, he responded I was like him, and that he didn't attend Beth Knesset either. I quickly added, "I do attend a church though."

My mentioning I attended church puzzled Yehudah. "I thought you were Jewish," he asked. "I am Jewish," I replied, "but I believe Jesus is the Jewish Messiah." "I have never heard this from a Jewish person. Why do you believe this?" queried Yehudah.

This initial discussion opened up a conversation that lasted about an hour as we drove to the hotel in Tiberias.

"Yehudah, God gave us many promises, Messianic prophecies, in the Tenach (Old Testament), to help us identify the Messiah. They are very specific and when someone comes claiming to be the Messiah we can compare his life with the prophecies to determine if he is, indeed, the Messiah."

"For example, Yehudah, we never met before this day. But I knew you were coming and I was aware of a number of "prophecies" about you. What I mean is, I knew you would be meeting me on this specific day at around 3:00 p.m. when I got off the plane and made my way to the terminal. I was told that it would be a male, not a female, who would be picking me up. I was also told that you would have a sign with my name on it. I was also told your name. When I arrived in the terminal I immediately started to look for you. I didn't consider any women or children, or men without signs, and

Continued on page 13

Continued from page 12

even men with signs without my name on it. I knew it had to be a man with a sign with my name on it. When all these "prophecies" came together in one person, you, I immediately went up to you and introduced myself and I had identified the correct person."

"Yehudah, in the same type of way, God gave us prophecies about the Messiah. The Tenach tells us He would be from the family of David, be born in Bethlehem, come before the destruction of the 2nd Temple in 70 A.D., and that He would die for our sins and rise from the grave according to Isaiah 53. There is only one person in all of history who fulfills the dozens of prophecies about the Messiah. This person is Jesus. He was born at the right time, in the right place, came from the right family, and lived and died as the Tenach foretold."

Yehudah was a secular Jew and was not at all hesitant to discuss Jesus being the Messiah. He had many good questions as he digested everything I shared. As he dropped me off at the hotel he eagerly accepted the literature I offered him and said he would definitely read it.

I would rather Moshe never had his stroke. God has told us, though, "... we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose," Romans 8:28. Moshe loves the Lord. God has called him to reach Jewish people in Israel. One of the "good" things to come out of this was this great opportunity to share Jesus with Yehudah, one of the very people Moshe loves and wants to reach with the message of Messiah Jesus.



"CHRIST IN THE PASSOVER"

Jewish Awareness Ministries Headquarters

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Leader: Mark Robinson

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Rev. Mark Robinson

Apples of Gold



by Rev. Mark Robinson

Moshe, turn off the TV and come to bed.”
“Moshe, why are you still watching TV? Turn it off and come to bed.”

When Shoshana didn't receive a response she decided to get out of bed and see why Moshe hadn't responded. It was the providence of God that she heard the TV. Exhausted, she had gone to bed earlier and fallen asleep. The sleep didn't last long and she awoke around 10:30 p.m. and heard the sound of the TV.

Going down stairs Shoshana at first didn't notice any problem with her husband. It didn't take long though for her to see there was a serious issue. Moshe was awake but had an extremely painful headache. He requested some Tylenol, but Shoshana realized this was more severe than just a headache.

“I'm calling an ambulance!” Moshe asked her not to, but the request was denied. The hospital was only 5 minutes from their home, and Shoshana's decision probably helped save Moshe's life. The hospital in the Sea of Galilee area was not located in the more populous town of Tiberias, but in a small town of about 300 people where the Gold's live. The hospital was initially established in 1955 replacing the Schweitzer Hospital established at the beginning of the nation in 1948 as a field hospital and was kept in that location and expanded through the years. Again, it was the providence of God at work in this very desperate situation, which certainly played a part in Moshe surviving the stroke he just had.

When Shoshana returned to Moshe after making the phone call, he was now unconscious. The ambulance arrived within 5 minutes and the paramedics immediately tended to Moshe and took him to the hospital. The quick arrival and the immediate attention would allow Moshe to survive the stroke.

Moshe had experienced a huge amount of bleeding in the brain as a result of the stroke. Upon arriving at the hospital, the doctors chilled his body temperature to attempt to stop the bleeding and stabilize Moshe. It worked, but Moshe was in very critical condition.

The doctors thought for sure that Moshe probably drank alcohol and smoked to have the severity of the stroke he had. Shoshana assured the doctors this was not the case. Nor was there any history of high blood pressure with Moshe, although at the time of the stroke his blood pressure was 244. Moshe was in excellent physical condition. For whatever reason, God allowed this to

happen, and allowed him to survive. The doctor's refer to Moshe as their “*miracle patient.*” Over 90% of stroke victims with the severity of Moshe's die within about 7 days.

Moshe was in ICU for about 4 weeks. What an encouragement to Shoshana, and many hundreds and perhaps thousands of praying people, when there was news that Moshe had movement in all of his extremities. Praise the Lord!

As of the writing of this Apples of Gold, Moshe is out of ICU and is on the road to recovery. He has been moved to a rehab hospital in the Haifa area. His progress is slow but steady. He is starting to breathe on his own and is moving both arms and legs. Lord willing, in the near future he will be able to breathe on his

own and have the feeding tube and breathing tube removed. It is our prayer, by the grace of God, that Moshe will have a full recovery.

I travelled to Israel within a few days of the stroke to be with Moshe and Shoshana. We won't know this side of heaven why the LORD allowed this to happen. In heaven it won't matter. As I talked with friends and acquaintances I was blessed by the good testimony Moshe had established among unbelievers and believers. More than one Jewish person said what a “*mensch*” Moshe is! “*Menshe*” is a Yiddish word meaning a person with dignity and honor.

One of my first emails to the J.A.M. board and others was “*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose,*” Romans 8:28. Somehow, someday, God will use this for good!

Shoshana has been a great testimony for Messiah Jesus throughout this ordeal. She closes all of her updates on Moshe with Psalm 121.

“I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.”

The God who keeps Israel, also keeps Moshe. Please join us in prayer for Moshe's recovery and grace and strength for Shoshana during this time.



Shadows of the Tribulation

by Rev. Mark Robinson

One of the defining characteristics of the anti-Christ's designs in the Tribulation period will be the attempted annihilation of Israel and the Jewish people. In the middle of the Tribulation period Satan is cast out of heaven to earth and specifically targets Israel and the Jewish people (the woman) for destruction.

"Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child." Revelation 12:12

Satan has attempted to destroy the Jewish people from their very beginning. Anti-Semitism is perhaps the main tool of the devil in his attempt to defeat God. A Bible believing Christian shouldn't be surprised at the Pharaohs, Hamans, Herods, Hitlers, and others through the millennia who have been Satan's dupes in his attempt to destroy God's plan, which is primarily based around the Jewish people and Israel as a nation.

The rise in anti-Semitism in the world today is reaching feverous pitch. It is coming from every sphere - political, religious, and economical.

The present occupant of the White House attended for many years a church whose pastor preached hatred of Jewish people. President Obama has been at best cool toward Israel, but that, I believe, is only because of the general sympathetic view of Israel by the congress and our citizens. His animus towards Israel, and ultimately Jewish people, can be seen in some of his actions in the past. Now editorial writers are starting to express publically, if still only meekly, what many have believed for many years.

Caroline Glick, the senior Middle East Fellow at the Center for Security Policy in Washington, DC and the deputy managing editor of *The Jerusalem Post*, wrote an article in the January 17, 2014 *Jerusalem Post*. The article, titled *The Truth Hurts*, wrote in response to the Obama administration condemning Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon for making private comments that became public about John Kerry's peace mission being an "incomprehensible obsession" and "messianic" and doomed to fail. Click commented:

"Aside from being dead wrong, the anti-Semitic undertones of the administration's castigation of the Jewish state as ungrateful are hard to miss....Presumably the administration's resort to these anti-Jewish tropes is inadvertent, but the fact that they have been used repeatedly is deeply disconcerting, and bespeaks, at a minimum, alarming insensitivity....And to advance this goal, ["to upend Israeli policy and force Israel to embrace the substance of the Obama administration's delusional and destructive actions"] they are using anti-

Semitic signals to castigate Israel and deny it the right to speak on its own behalf."

I believe Glick is trying to be kind, realizing that the U.S. has been a very good friend of Israel and supporter since her birth in 1948. But, this administration is not like previous administrations. Past Presidents and their administrations have had issues and disagreements with Israel, but this President and his administration is different. What is the difference? Anti-Semitism is a foundational driving force. I believe the days ahead will bear this out.

In an article titled "*Let's Burn the Jew' is not Anti-Semitic?*" Christine Williams of the Gatestone Institute, on January 15th, 2014, reported that "a Winnipeg [Canada] judge ruled that grabbing a Jewish classmate, flicking a lighter to her hair and saying, 'Let's burn the Jew,' was not anti-Semitic." Williams commented on the growing acceptance of what she called the new anti-Semitism world-wide.

"Today, we ignore a creeping anti-Semitism that singles out Jews unfairly, and targets the state of Israel. In addressing the New Anti-Semitism, Victor Davis Hanson, Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution, discusses how Israel is being singled out by the international community, with over 75% of recent UN resolutions targeting Israel for human rights violations... This blame-the-Jew, blame-Israel trend is a disturbing one, all too reminiscent of the era when Nazis used propaganda campaigns to promote a lethal hatred of Jews, who were portrayed as sub-human, and interested primarily in their own economic gain....

Williams further comments:

"This new anti-Semitism now can be found as well in a growing trend among evangelical Christians, once overwhelmingly sympathetic to Israel. Peter Wehner, a senior fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, and who has worked in the administrations of Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and George W. Bush, explains this pro-Palestinian trend in his article, 'Israel and Evangelical Christians'. He calls it a 'movement,' and states that it rests in part on the uninformed and unexamined view that Israel's founding was illegitimate and immoral, and that Israel has become an enemy of justice and peace. In this line of thinking, no matter how erroneous, it follows that 'authentic Christianity therefore requires one to embrace the pro-Palestinian narrative on the basis of their faith.'"

Satan is marshaling his troops. The rise of anti-Semitism, from all quarters, should not be unexpected for those Bible believers who understand God's plan for Israel and how close we probably are to the beginning of the Tribulation period. Let us be reminded though, Genesis 12:3, "*I will bless them who bless thee, and curse them who curse thee...*" is still operative today.



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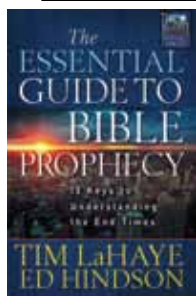


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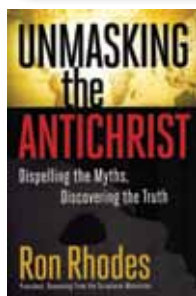
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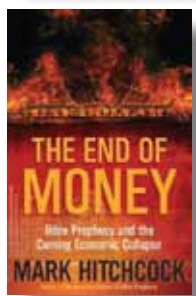
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