

The Passover Festival and the Removing of the *Hametz*

For the Passover Festival we were told to put away all leaven (*hametz*) from our dwellings in the Torah: *“⁶On the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Matzot (Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is in our day referred to as the Passover Festival) to Adonai. For seven days you are to eat matzah {bread without leavening or hametz}” (Lev. 23:6).* Every Jewish home is commanded to remove all *hametz* from the dwellings for seven days, and this is done before anyone eats the Passover Seder. The apostle Paul wrote: *“⁷Get rid of the old hametz (See Ex. 12:9), so you may be a new batch, just as you are unleavened—for Messiah, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed. ⁸Therefore let us celebrate the feast not with old hametz (See Ex. 13:7 and Deut. 16:3), the hametz of malice and wickedness, but with unleavened bread—the matzah of sincerity and truth” (1 Cor. 5:7-8).* The word *hametz* (leaven) is often used in Scripture as a symbol for sin. Have you put away all *chametz* / sin?

The Lord *Yeshua* said: *“... Be on guard yourselves against the hametz of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. ²There is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and nothing hidden that will not be made known. ³Therefore, whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in private rooms will be proclaimed from the housetops” (Luke 12:1b-3).* He said that the *hametz* that we must guard against is hypocrisy. You can fool me, your parents, your employer, your friends and even yourself, for a while, but ultimately, *Yeshua*'s words will come to pass and all of your and my sin(s) will be revealed. Satan and his army of evil spirits, armed with the authority of *Yeshua*'s own words in Luke 12:1-3 (and the *Tanakh*, for example in Psalm 51:6a *“Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being...”*) are busily planning to reveal our sin, but in his timing and not ours. Satan chooses and looks for the most difficult of circumstances in order to inflict the most damage because his intent is to kill and destroy and damage God's reputation. Has our sin found us out yet? (*“But if you don't do this, behold, you sin against Adonai! Be assured! Your sin will find you out!” Num. 32:23*) Consider the following Scriptures:

“¹⁰But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you too, why do you look down on your brother? For we all will stand before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹For it is written, “As I live, says Adonai, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.”¹²So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.” (Romans 14:10-13) “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Messiah, so that each one may receive what is due for the things he did while in the body—whether good or bad.” (2 Cor. 5:10) “¹²For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword—piercing right through to a separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³No creature is hidden from Him, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.” (Hebrews 4:12-13)

Yes, we must all give an account. But because it has not yet been required of us to do so (especially publicly), we are often deceived into hypocrisy and we put it off. Yearly this is the time that Adonai set aside for us to do some deep cleaning and get *hametz* out. This is no easy task, and in my home it takes several days and meticulous discipline to get it out of our home, car, clothes, office, property, etc. The natural, which is seen does reveal the spiritual which is not seen (See Romans 1:20) and we must therefore endeavor to go deep into our soul and do some *hametz* (spring) cleaning. The Lord meant for us to do it in our homes as stated in the Torah, but He also meant for us to do some deep spiritual cleansing during the Spring High Holidays. I think it is safe to say that He is more interested in the state of our hearts than He is in the state of our homes. Did you remove all *hametz* from the areas of your jurisdiction? If not, you are in disobedience. Similarly, are you prepared to 'get rid of old hametz' in your spiritual life?

On the 14th of Aviv (Nisan), some 2,000 years ago, our Messiah on Golgotha (the Place of Skulls) accomplished a great victory for you and me. Let us consider for a moment Dr. Luke's account in Luke 23:44-49. The Roman officer in the narrative was a centurion (see Matt. 27:54, Mk 15:39), a man of war and a killing machine. He was not a believer. But standing near the cross, and beholding the things that happened, he declared *Yeshua* to be a righteous man. What did he see? What could he see? Darkness covered the whole land from noon until three in the afternoon on Aviv/Nisan 14 and there were no lights, no torches, and no way to see much at all. Nevertheless, the centurion confesses that *Yeshua is the Son of God!* The centurion believes! Also,

the rowdy non-religious crowd that had assembled there to mock Him and enjoy *the show*, ‘*returned home beating their breasts*’ (this is what we do when we celebrate *Yom Kippur*) Why? Didn’t they get what they had asked for? He was crucified and He had just died. These were not believers and they were not His friends and they were not there looking to be convicted of sin. But they left convinced, convicted, contrite, and guilty. The Roman officer is transformed, the crowd is transformed, but all his friends flee and hide in great fear for their own skin and beheld nothing. His friends did not beat their breasts, His friends did not proclaim Him to be the Son of God, instead they went into hiding defeated and discouraged. Their sin stood before them, their cowardice unveiled, their belief rented like the temple veil, their trust shattered and their utter insufficiency revealed. Why? Didn’t they just witness what the Roman centurion and the crowd saw? NO THEY DID NOT!

It is one thing to stand by the cross, it is quite another to gaze from a distance. Without a personal involvement with the execution tree, without applying the blood, without witnessing all that took place in that afternoon as the rest of the Passover lambs were being killed on behalf of the nation of Israel, you and I will not experience the transformation (metamorphosis) nor the victory of *Yeshua* over the evil one. What did they ultimately and intimately see? Colossians 2:14-15 tells us that: “*He wiped away the bill of charges against us. Because of the regulations, it stood as a testimony against us; but he removed it by nailing it to the execution-stake.*”¹⁵ *Stripping the rulers and authorities of their power, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by means of the cross.*” Also Revelation 12:11 tells us that we: “*...have overcome him (Satan) by the Blood of the Lamb, by the words of our testimony (about what the blood has done for us) and because we love not our lives even unto the death.”* The Blood of Our Passover Lamb is available, as it was for the women and the apostles, but one has to draw near (we must get close), appropriate it and apply it to our lives. In Matt. 27:50-54 we see that the resurrection was at hand when the graves were opened at His death. Did they miss forever the opportunity to be convinced that *Yeshua is the Son of God* and the *Righteous One*? They didn’t miss it and neither did you and I!

Many of us have been taught erroneously so we do not get the results. We get used to testifying about our Life in Messiah, and we get less than excellent results with this strategy. We preach Good News to Satan’s POW camps of bound people – those behind barbed-wire-fence camps who are enslaved by the enemy’s forces. They are captives inside the fence and blinded (2 Cor. 4:4). What we should do is to bind the *strong man* and place the demon guards under the authority of Messiah and Him crucified so that the captives can escape and run to their freedom. Satan is a liar and a deceiver. Scripture establishes that *Yeshua* already paid the price for every person in this planet (their lives, their health and infirmities). The Promised Land is no longer in the hands of the bank or the mortgage company – the title is in *our* hands. But there are squatters in our inherited property, and they do not want to leave. We read them *decrees* but they do not make a move because they are not nice. What we have to do is serve them with an expulsion notice. We have authority from the Father’s Supreme Court to drive them out. The order reads clearly: “Satan, Get Out!” Scripture teaches us: “*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...*” (See *Hosea 4:6*). This was exactly the same strategy used by Pharaoh in Egypt and he did not heed to The Eternal’s voice – not even after nine plagues. It took Passover to free our people – and it took Messiah’s Passover to free us! We are free from the bondage of sin and death, aren’t we?

What we have done is to preach the Wisdom of God before preaching the Power of God and by changing the sequence we get very little results. We teach people about *Yeshua* and then try to get His power and it takes a LONG TIME. But when people experience the power of God and you ask them “*what happened to you?*” they reply: “*I do not know, one moment I was dead but now I live. One moment I was blind, but now I see!*” In Acts 3 the Pharisees “*wanted me see their credentials...*” But the blind man said: “*Glory to God I was blind but now I see. I cannot explain what happened, but I can see!*” Power is not understood; power is experienced. You do not have to have a PhD in nuclear physics to understand a nuclear bomb, just throw it and you will see, even if you do not understand what a neutron is. The Power of God is available because *Yeshua* died in order to give it to us. It is time to clean up our act and get rid of any *hametz* in our lives. The ‘*Power of the Cross*’ is available. Let’s do it! *Hag Pesach Sameach & Shabbat Shalom!*