

Passover - Yahuwah Introduces Himself

The elderly man was a little apprehensive as he approached the familiar buildings. Forty years earlier he had fled for his very life from these surroundings. Now he was returning to carry out a divinely commanded mission in the midst of what was then, and had been for centuries, the most powerful nation on the face of the earth.

Moses and his brother Aaron were ushered into the audience chamber of the Egyptian Pharaoh. Called upon to state their business, Aaron served as Moses' spokesman to tell the ruler that the Aluhym of the Hebrews had sent them with a message. "Thus says Yahuwah Aluhym of Israel," Aaron declared, "Let My people go, that they might hold a feast to Me in the wilderness" (Ex. 5:1).

Incredulous at this bold request, Pharaoh responded contemptuously. "Who is Yahuwah that I should obey His voice and let Israel go? I do not know Yahuwah, nor will I let Israel go" (v. 2). This question, "Who is the Aluhym of Israel that I should obey Him?" was to be very forcefully answered during the weeks ahead. Yahuwah introduced Himself to Pharaoh through a series of mighty acts that brought once mighty Egypt to her knees. These miraculous interventions culminated in the events of the first Passover. In the aftermath, the Egyptians urgently besought the Israelites to depart and finally thrust them out of the land with gifts of gold and jewelry.

The Aluhym of Israel answered Pharaoh's question by revealing Himself as the great Creator who has power over all things. Ultimately, He showed Himself to have total power over life and death. And it was through the Passover that Yahuwah chose to introduce Himself and His plan to Israel.

Down through the ages, the answer to the question "Who is the Aluhym of Israel?" has

reverberated time and again in the message of the Passover. Even today, when people ask Pharaoh's age-old question about who Yahuwah is that we should obey Him, the answer is *still* revealed in the Passover and now through Amanuwal's Memorial Service. For through this Feast and Service, we learn of His incredible power. But, as we shall see, we also learn of much, much more.

Amanuwal's Memorial

Amanuwal told His disciples that He fervently desired to eat the Passover meal with them before He suffered (Luke 22:15). However, they did not understand what he meant. The New Testament accounts tell us that Amanuwal's "last supper" was an institution of his Memorial, (Matt. 26:19; Luke 22:13-14), and not a ceremony that contradicted Yahuwah's law. They also make it evident that the disciples saw nothing unusual about having a meal the evening before Passover. Mark 14:12 shows that it was, in fact, actually the disciples who asked Ha'Mashyach where they were to celebrate the Passover. There is no hint that the timing of the dinner was in any way out of the ordinary.

Peter and John were sent by Amanuwal into Jerusalem on the after-noon of Abib 13 (Luke 22:8). They arranged for a room and oversaw the preparation of the traditional Passover meal that would follow the next evening. Now some here object and claim that Ha'Mashyach and the disciples *were eating* the traditional Passover meal. But that could not be so, since the temple slaughter of lambs wouldn't occur until the afternoon that marked the close of Abib 14, which was according to the scriptures of killing the Passover on the 14th and with the traditions of the Sadducees and Pharisees. This of course called for

Passover - Yahuwah Introduces Himself

celebrating the Passover meal one day later than when Ha'Mashyach and His disciples partook of this meal. (cf. John 18:28).

It wasn't necessary to have a lamb this evening, as the final lamb would be slaughtered the following evening according to the law of Yahuwah. Note the record preserved by the first-century Jewish author, Philo of Alexandria: "[Passover is the day] which the Hebrews call, in their native language, *pascha*, on which the whole nation sacrifices, each individual among them, not waiting for the priests, since on this occasion the law was given, for one especial day in every year, that each private home slays his own victim on this day (*The Decalogue*, bk. 30. sec. 159).

Shortly after sunset then, *beginning* Abib 14, Amanuwal Ha'Mashyach and the rest of the Twelve joined Peter and John and began a meal. The entire *method* of this meal became very significant that night. The evening initially began much like any meal would, but events took a unique turn as the meal progressed.

Institution of Foot-washing

During the meal Amanuwal rose from the table. He laid aside His outer robe, picked up a towel and began making preparations to wash the disciples' feet. Imagine their consternation as it dawned on them what was about to happen! Foot washing was after all a menial task generally relegated to the lowliest member of the household. As the Twelve sat there embarrassed not quite knowing what to say or do. Peter blurted out, "You will never wash my feet!" After making the point to Peter that "if I do not wash you, you have no part with Me", Ha'Mashyach received a quick acquiescence and a request to be washed all over. (John 13:6-9).

When He finished washing the feet of each of the Twelve, Amanuwal laid aside the towel put His outer robe back on, and resumed His seat at the table. After looking around Him, He asked if they understood what He had really done. He waited a few moments and then began to explain the real significance of what had occurred.

During the 3 1/2 years of His ministry Amanuwal had continually talked about the Kingdom of Yahuwah. The disciples understood this to be a literal kingdom and of course, they thought they knew *all about* kingdoms. After all, they lived in the kingdom of Judea-ruled directly by Herod. Judea in turn was part of an even larger kingdom - the great Roman Empire. Their concept of ruler ship and what it meant to occupy a throne had been much affected by their experience and background. But Ha'Mashyach wanted them to understand that the Kingdom of *Yahuwah* was vastly different from any *human* government.

In *Yahuwah's* Kingdom, for which they were preparing, the rulers were to be *servants*. This was quite different from what they had seen of the Gentile rulers around them or, for that matter of the Jewish religious leaders in Jerusalem. Humility and service are to be hallmarks of Yahuwah's leadership. In washing their feet, Ha'Mashyach gave them an example upon which they could reflect for the rest of their lives. He instructed them on that night that they were to *follow* His example and wash one another's feet (vv. 14-17). This would keep what He did ever before their eyes. It didn't end with *them*, however. In some of His final instructions to the disciples, Ha'Mashyach told them that they were to teach all of those who, in the future, would respond to their teachings "to observe all things that I have

Passover - Yahuwah Introduces Himself

commanded you" (Matt. 28:20). This would certainly include the foot washing instructions that Ha'Mashyach gave His final evening with them.

In modern Western society, walking is rarely a primary mode of transportation, especially in open toed sandals. As a result we don't generally anticipate washing our feet as one of the first things to do upon arriving at journey's end. Nevertheless, as we reflect on the biblical custom and go through the literal practice of it once a year, we are reminded of the same lesson that Amanuwal sought to teach His disciples on the final evening of His human ministry.

The Bread and the Wine

Several items, such as wine and bread, were traditionally part of any meal eaten by the Jews in Amanuwal's day. Since this room had already been prepared for the Passover to be held the following evening, no leavening was at this meal. During this meal Amanuwal took two items and imparted special significance to them. This is how the bread (unleavened) and the wine became the center of this New Testament service.

Some assembly members in the Greek city of Corinth later became confused about whether or not this New Testament observance should include a full meal and not simply symbolic portions of unleavened bread and wine. Because of this, Sha'ul explained the matter in I Corinthians 11:23-26. He admonished them that "when you come together in one place, it is *not* to eat a supper nor is it Yahuwah's Passover Meal [a full meal – Night Much to Be Remembered or Observed]" (v.20). Rather, they were supposed to have eaten a normal meal at home beforehand (v. 34).

As far as Amanuwal's Memorial observance itself went, the order of service that Sha'ul had delivered to them came directly from Amanuwal Ha'Mashyach (v.23). We find this from Sha'ul's instructions in I Corinthians 2 as well as from the direct Good News accounts of Ha'Mashyach's final meal. It is clear that we are to first wash each other's feet then take of the bread, and then of the wine.

There can be no question that the bread is to be unleavened as it represented an unleavened sacrifice. This room had been prepared for Passover and no leavening could be allowed (Ex.12:8), and therefore that was all that would have been on the table the night of Ha'Mashyach's final meal.

As to the question of whether it was wine or grape juice that was used, the answer is simple to determine. In the land of Israel grapes were harvested in the fall. By the spring, six months later, all of the fall harvest had either been eaten fresh or else preserved as raisins, vinegar or wine. There was no such thing as grape juice with an extended shelf life at that time because the Israelites did not have pasteurization or modern canning techniques, neither was there any frozen concentrate!

In the latter part of their final meal together, Amanuwal took some unleavened bread from the table, blessed it, and then broke it into many pieces. He told the disciples that it represented His body, which was to be broken for them. Then he passed the bread around and they all ate. Shortly thereafter, He took a cup of wine, blessed it and passed it to His disciples for each to drink. That fruit of the vine, He told them, represented His blood, which was to be shed to make the New Covenant possible. We reenact this ceremony in the Memorial service year by year.

Passover - Yahuwah Introduces Himself

The sacrifice that Amanuwal Ha'Mashyach was preparing to make was symbolized by the broken piece of unleavened bread and the sip of wine taken by each of the disciples that night. These two items had previously been pictured at the Passover table representing what would happen at the fulfillment of sacrificing of an unblemished lamb. The full nature of His sacrifice is prophesied in Isaiah 53 and then described in the account of His crucifixion.

Bread presented on the sacrificial altar with blood in the temple throughout the year was unleavened. The twelve loaves of the bread of presence (called "show bread" in the NKJV) displayed on the table in the Holy Place were also unleavened. Leavening is often used in the Bible as a type of sin (cf. Luke 12:1; 1 Cor. 5:6-8). Therefore, unleavened bread symbolizes a pure sinless state (cf. v.8).

Before Ha'Mashyach was taken out to Golgotha to be crucified, He first underwent a horrible scourging. This scourging was a brutal beating delivered by a Roman *lictor*, one especially trained in this task. Used in the beating was a special whip, which consisted of a number of leather cords to which were affixed small portions of bone, metal or glass. Repeated lashes from such an instrument literally ripped the skin off the victim. Scourging caused such blood loss and shock to the system that many times it was the direct cause of death.

Why did Ha'Mashyach undergo such a beating? Notice the prophecy in Isaiah 53: "Yet on himself he bore our sufferings, our torments he endured, while we counted him smitten by Yahuwah, struck down by disease and misery; but he was pierced for our transgressions, tortured for our iniquities; **the chastisement he bore is health for us and**

by his scourging we are healed" (vv.4-5 NEB). The Apostle Peter quotes a portion of this passage in his first epistle, emphasizing the phrase, "by whose stripes you were healed" (I Peter 2:24). When Ha'Mashyach told the disciples that the pieces of bread represented His physical body, broken on our behalf, he was showing that our healing is made possible as a result of His suffering in our stead. In fact, failure to discern this basic truth is why many in Corinth were NOT healed! (I Cor. 11:29-30).

After His beating, Ha'Mashyach was taken out of the city to the hill of Golgotha, there to be crucified with criminals. Amanuwal's agonizing crucifixion lasted for about six hours, coming to an end when a Roman soldier plunged a spear into His body and His life's blood poured out onto the ground.

The fact that Amanuwal died as a result of bleeding to death isn't readily apparent from the Good News accounts of the crucifixion as translated in the King James Version. However, there are several points that prove this to have been the case. First, Amanuwal was the true Passover Lamb and the Passover lambs died as a result of bleeding to death. Also, scientist can prove that this type of crucifixion would cause one to drowning on his own blood, suffocating the heart. In addition, Ha'Mashyach emphasized the blood-shed of His sacrifice in the symbolic wine to be used at his Memorial. Moreover, the Apostle Sha'ul said that we are justified from our sins by the shed blood of Amanuwal Ha'Mashyach (cf. Rom. 5:9).

With these things in mind, a careful examination of the text adds further clarity. John 19:34 in the King James translation makes it appear that the soldier stabbed Ha'Mashyach's side *after* He had already

Passover - Yahuwah Introduces Himself

died. However, the Greek verb translated "pierced" is in the aorist tense as is attested to by the *Arndt-Gingrich Greek Lexicon* and others. What is the significance of this point? 'The function of the aorist tense is a matter of tremendous importance. The time of action is past.... The Greek aorist may be translated by either the simple past tense in English 'I loosed' or the perfect tense in English 'I have loosed.' Usually the context will indicate which is to be used" (*Essentials of New Testament Greek*, pp. 66-67). The account in John 19:34 is describing *why* Ha'Mashyach's legs didn't have to be broken to speed up his death - because a soldier had *earlier* pierced his side and He had then quickly bled to death.

Matthew 27:49, as preserved in many of the most ancient manuscripts (including both the *Sinaiticus* and *Codex Vaticanus*), ends with the phrase, "And another took a spear and thrust it into his side and out came water and blood." While this is left out of the King James translation, it is included, at least in the footnotes, in many of the modern translations. It is certainly descriptive of what happened and was, no doubt, part of the original text. The next verse says that Ha'Mashyach cried out and then died.

The wine symbolic of the blood of our Savior reminds us of *how* our sins are forgiven. The Apostle Sha'ul instructs us that "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23) and that all of us as human beings have sinned (Rom 3:23). Hebrews 9:22 goes on to explain that "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins" (NRSV).

The essence of the Sacrificing (Killing) Passover is that Ha'Mashyach took our place. The ancient Israelites were spared when the

death angel came through the land of Egypt because they were actually under the blood of the Passover lamb, which had been killed on the 14th between the two evening and its blood was over their doors (Ex. 12:7, 13). When we observe Amanuwal's Memorial, we are partaking of the symbols of the sacrifice that Amanuwal Ha'Mashyach made on our behalf. He came as the "Lamb of Yahuwah who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29). He was "our Passover... sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5:7).

Who is Yahuwah of Israel that we should obey Him? Not only is He the Creator Yahuwah who has complete power over His creation - as He demonstrated to Pharaoh and the Egyptians - but He is also the One who so *loved* all of mankind that He gave His only begotten Son to redeem every one of us from our sins (John 3: 16). Yahuwah chose in ancient times to introduce Himself and His plan through the Passover, and now as we appear before Him annually at this Sacred Memorial - partaking of the symbols of our Savior's sacrifice - we are re-introduced and reminded anew.