



# **A Passover Thought**

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When you hear the term “Passover,” what enters into your mind? If you come from a religious Jewish background, your answer would probably be death. When studying Passover from a Biblical point of view, one learns that Passover brought death to every home. The question which must be answered is whose death? There are two possible answers. One is the firstborn and the other is the Passover offering. It was only when the family observed HaShem’s instructions and killed the lamb and properly applied the blood of the lamb that the angel of death would pass over that home and the firstborn would live. In other words, the blood of the Passover sacrifice provided life.

Not only is the term “Passover” important and full of significance, but so is the concept of the “firstborn”. Here again, when you hear this term, what do you think of? The best response is an inheritance. In the Scriptures, there is an inherent relationship between the firstborn and an inheritance. The message one should derive from this is that the Passover sacrifice not only gives life, but also secured an inheritance.

There is an additional theological truth that is contained in rightly understanding Passover. Many times individuals struggle with the simplicity of the Gospel message. They frequently state that accepting Yeshua’s death as the payment of all of one’s sins seems too easy. Rather than struggling to receive this Good News, one should be quick to thank G-d for this wonderful gift of salvation. The simplicity and the sufficiency of the Gospel is most similar to what was revealed by the Torah in its revelation concerning Passover.

In Exodus 12:29, one learns that the Destroyer went forth at midnight and judged the house of both Pharaoh and the poor man who was taken captive and was in the dungeon. One could not find two more different men. One experiencing the life of luxury and the other perhaps not even receiving the bare necessities of life. Nevertheless, G-d judged both of these individuals with the same punishment. Notice that Pharaoh heard much about the G-d of Israel, while the man in the dungeon did not have an opportunity to hear or respond to the Passover instructions. The principle is clear, failure to respond obediently to Passover has significant consequences, regardless of all circumstances.

This fact might seem harsh, but let one also realize that those individuals who did in fact respond to Passover and partook of the Passover Lamb and properly dealt with the Blood of the Lamb escaped a judgment that brought death. Similarly, it did not matter who it was who kept the Passover. If one was a highly religious person who strove to live according to G-dly truth, or a brazen sinner, if a person obeyed the Passover message he was blessed. This fact shows that there was power in the blood of the Passover lamb to bring about a blessing to the one who utilized it in accordance with G-d’s instructions.

There is another important outcome of having a Passover experience. Those who did the Passover in Egypt actually entered into a new relationship with HaShem. While they were partaking of the Passover, they were commanded in Exodus 12:11 to eat it with their waists girded, their shoes on their feet and their staffs in their hands. These three commandments would have been very peculiar to the people. Earlier in the text, the Passover participants are also instructed to eat the Passover reclining when he would eat. This was the posture of a king or very wealthy person. The Hebrews were slaves in Egypt and would not have eaten in this manner. This change in posture when eating the Passover reveals the change the Passover

brought to the Hebrews, through the observance of Passover, a person had a change in status. No longer should the Hebrews think of themselves as in bondage to Pharaoh. Yet, one having his waist girded was the manner for a person who was prepared to serve. In other words, there seems to be a conflict between eating while reclining and having one's waist girded. The message is clear. Although the Hebrews should no longer consider themselves slaves to Pharaoh, the Passover experience came with an obligation to become servants of their Redeemer.

Also, it would have been most odd to eat with shoes upon one's feet. This commandment revealed two important aspects of Passover. The first was a sense of urgency. Eating with shoes on one's feet conveyed to the person that the Passover experience would provide an Exodus which one was called to respond to with haste. This instructs the reader that leaving one's current location, and moving to where HaShem wants an individual to be, should be done without any delay. The Hebrews were told that by means of Passover they were to depart from Egypt to go and worship the L-rd in the wilderness. Hence, the Passover experience also provides a person the ability to worship G-d, which was something that the Hebrews could not do while in bondage in Egypt. Similarly, when we are in bondage to sin and not located in the will of the L-rd, we are unable to truly and properly worship.

The third thing which the Hebrews were commanded to do while partaking of the Passover was to have their staffs in their hands. Here again, this would have been most odd. However, when things appear in the Word of G-d that seems peculiar, this is usually where there is significant revelation. The staff represented authority in the Scriptures and thus, by means of observing the Passover, one is given authority to carry out the will and purposes of G-d.

Finally, one should notice that the Passover brought a change of identity to the Hebrews. After keeping the Passover, the Hebrews were called the congregation of Israel. The term in Hebrew is **עדת ישראל**. This is significant because the phrase actually means "The Witness of Israel. This fact should inform the reader that the Passover experience turns the one who observes Passover into a person who is called to bear witness of the Passover.

This is one of the primary purposes of the special meal known as the Passover Seder. The primary purpose is to retell and explain the meaning of Passover to one's children. But there is also an emphasis to invite guests to one's Seder table and bear witness to those who are not aware of the Passover message.

As believers in Messiah Yeshua, Whom Paul calls our Passover, we are commanded to understand the significance and relationship between the Passover in the T'nach (Old Testament) and why it was that Yeshua was crucified on Passover. It is not enough that we only understand this, but bear witness to the eternal redemption that His blood provides all who receive Him and thereby keeps the true Passover of Yeshua.