



The Zion Letter

The Monthly Newsletter of For Zion's Sake Ministries, Inc.
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Passover: The Agony and the Love of Messiah

God commanded Moses to tell the children of Israel to eat three things at Passover: unleavened bread (Matzo), roast lamb, and bitter herbs. In Judaism the matzo (unleavened bread) is often referred to as "The Bread of Affliction." If you eat it for a week you'll understand why. It sure isn't like eating a good bagel!

The bitter herb reminds us of the suffering of the Jewish people as slaves under Pharaoh. My ancestors suffered greatly for hundreds of years. To this day Jewish people around the world remember the suffering of our ancestors in Egypt. In a New Covenant sense the bitter herb recalls the bitter suffering endured by our savior, but was that suffering just about the pain of the crucifixion, or something more? The Last Supper wasn't loaves of fluffy fresh baked bread and fish as

da Vinci's famous painting might have you believe. The Last Supper was a meal of roast lamb, bitter herbs, matzo and wine. There may have been a few other items of food on the table, but the prescribed menu is listed above. All of the things on the Passover table are symbolic of the Messiah.

The Agony of the Messiah:

Yeshua was flogged, punched, spit on, sleepless and probably cold. He may have been hungry and we know He was thirsty. He was made to carry His cross and was crowned with an excruciating crown of thorns which in Israel comes from a bush that has spikes about 2-3 inches long! Yeshua agonized in the Garden of Gethsemane. *"Then He said to them, My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me,"* MT 26:38. *"And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as you will,"*

MT 26:39. Most people believe Jesus was agonizing about the physical pain He was about to endure. Others believe that His agony was His reluctance to take the sins of the world upon Himself, which would be an unbearable weight for any natural man. This they say was symbolized in His inability to carry His cross fully.

These interpretations may be true, but I think the greatest agony that Yeshua the man faced is an agony that we all face throughout life, which is the agony of forgiving others when we've been betrayed, wronged, physically abused, called names, had a loved one taken from us, etc. This concept is accentuated by the fact that the last act before His arrest was Judas' betrayal and the continuous mocking he endured, even while dying on the cross.

Think about it, when you are hurt, especially by a close friend or relative, how does it make you feel? Stop for a minute and think about a time or two when somebody wronged you greatly... What was your response? Did it make you angry? Did you want vengeance? Now imagine having to forgive all the wrongs of every person throughout history in the midst of suffering a horrible death at the hands of wicked people and willed by God the Father. Perhaps you are a loving person, and not easily offended by others. Good for you! Nevertheless, there are millions who get offended and seek vengeance! I recently heard a man say that sin is anything that Jesus would **not** do. The bottom line is that our sins hurt God and His Son. Think about a situation like a man screaming insults at his tearful wife and children, hurting and scaring them, or what about a child telling his loving parents that he hates them. That's what God experiences on a global scale from humanity. Know that every sin committed by you, me and everyone else in the world hurts God immensely.



Because God loves us, our sins hurt Him all the more. Furthermore, Jesus paid the penalty for our disgusting sin through suffering in His flesh and suffering mental anguish. The penalty for sin is death and Yeshua paid the ultimate price for our sins. The Lord and author of Life itself gave up His life to make sure the entire world would have an opportunity for redemption, both here on earth and eternal life in the age to come.

Even more than the weight of carrying our sins, perhaps the hardest thing for a man to do is to forgive his brother, ***“A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city, and contentions are like the bars of a citadel,”*** Proverbs 18:19. It can take years to forgive a wrong suffered or an offense rendered. Sometimes family members don’t talk to each other for years. Sometimes friends cut off friends like they never existed. I know this from personal experience. I think perhaps the greatest agony that Jesus faced in the Garden of Gethsemane was facing the requirement to forgive the sins of the whole world while being brutally mocked, tortured and crucified. The Bible tells us that Yeshua was emptied of His divinity, ***“Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross,”*** Phil 2:5-8. Yes my friend, He had to forgive every wrong, every murder, everything God and Jesus would **not** do, and He had to do it in the flesh, in the form of a man. Perhaps that’s why His body had to be broken and His will crushed, so that in His brokenness He could say, ***“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they are doing,”*** Luke 23:34.

Conclusion:

The three things God commanded Moses and the Israelites to eat on Passover in Exodus 12 were roast lamb, unleavened bread, and bitter herbs. The Lamb spoke of Yeshua, ***“The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”*** John 1:29, our Passover Lamb (see 1 Corinthians 5:7-8). The unleavened bread/matzo represents His Body, given for you and me. The bitter herb reminds us each year as we eat it at Passover of His agony, forgiving the sins of people He had never even

met! And what of love? Well like a man loves his wife, God loves you and me. Don’t mess with God’s loved ones... ***“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life,”*** John 3:16. Have you received the love of God and His forgiveness? Why not reach out to Him now?

In His love,
Rabbi Joe and Dawn

Ministry Update: Keep on the Sunny Side!

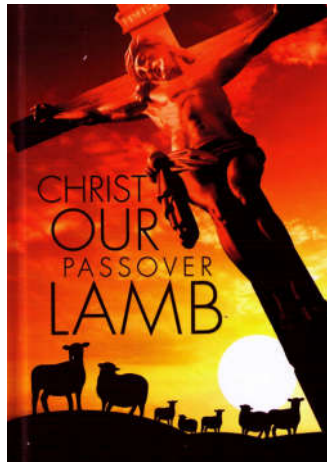
Dear friends,

Last Passover Dawn and I had the blessing of ministering the Passover to folks from Hiltons, Virginia. It was the home church of the famous Carter family, as in June Carter Cash, A.P., Sarah and Maybelle Carter. Many descendants of the Carter family still attend this precious Church in that simple country community. One of my favorite Carter family songs is “Keep on the Sunny Side.” Over the past six months I haven’t felt well. A few weeks ago the doctor here in Bristol performed a bone marrow biopsy and they found cancer cells. They diagnosed me with a relapse of Hairy Cell Leukemia. In 2012, I underwent chemotherapy for Hairy Cell Leukemia, and was told by doctors that it would take fifteen, twenty or twenty-five years for the cancer to grow back. I did not expect to be facing it again in three years.

Receiving the diagnosis didn’t hit me as hard as it did my wife and children, although deep down I knew something was wrong. I didn’t ask for it, but when Ben from Paul Wilbur Ministries found out, they offered to post my situation on Facebook. I prayed with the ministry and together we sought the Lord’s wisdom about when and what to post. A day or so later, it went viral on Paul Wilbur’s official site with over 4500 “Likes,” “800” prayer comments and pieces of advice, and more than 525 shares by people who care! I am grateful to Paul Wilbur, Ben, and Rabbi Greg Hirschberg who put us on a global prayer list and to all the Pastors, Rabbis and folks who put my family on their prayer lists or just prayed! Thank You!

Several days later, (the end of February) we traveled to

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Wake Forest University Medical Center in Winston-Salem to meet with the specialist and discuss treatment options. The doctor there reviewed the biopsy and took new blood tests. To our great surprise, my blood counts had risen significantly. Furthermore, the doctor announced that the cancer detected in the biopsy did not require any form of treatment at this time! Last week I went for another test in Bristol and my counts were the same: a bit sub-normal in some areas, but still pretty good.

Therefore it is with great joy that I tell you I will continue my work and ministry until the Almighty says stop! We are going forward with our Passover Banquet and teaching in several area churches in March and April. Please pray for strength and victorious ministry!

Other Praise News:

- On March 9th, my mother Harriet, age 89, was hit by a car backing out of a space at a local community center in her area. Thank God she appears to have only been banged up but no broken bones or internal bleeding! Again thank you for your prayers for Mom and for her salvation.
- We have purchased a system for “live-streaming” our messages and or worship on the internet. We also have the capability of uploading to our “YouTube” channel and our web-site. We have also purchased a camera and expect to be on the internet in perhaps one to two weeks! We will keep you posted! It’s taken longer than we anticipated, but we are finally getting there!
- God has given me an incredible revelation of Daniel 7 & 8 along with Revelation 12 & 13. I believe this teaching will explain where we are on God’s prophetic timeline, the coming defeat of radical Islam, The Return of the Jewish people to Israel from the Americas and Europe, The future of America laid out plainly in the Bible, and the coming Anti-Messiah, the Dragon and the false prophet. No its not Barak Obama or Donald Trump...
For your love gift of \$30 or more we will send you a two Disk teaching that caused one man to completely change his understanding of the Presidential election and why it’s been so unusual.

Conclusion:

Thank you for your patience with Dawn and me while we have undergone this very difficult trial in the last 5 years. It may have hindered our work for a time, but God is always victorious. We deeply appreciate your prayers and faithful support. We pray for you as well! I am optimistic about life and God’s plan for our future! As I wrote at the beginning, the Carter Family and June Carter herself sang “Keep on the Sunny Side” of life. ***I choose to keep on the sunny side of life and make the most of every day! I hope you do too!***

To our Jewish friends we wish a happy Purim and Passover. To our Christian friends we wish you a blessed Holy week and celebration of our Lord’s resurrection!

In Yeshua’s love,
Joe and Dawn Bell

For Zion's Sake Ministries, making a difference in people's lives in our community.

www.forzionsake.org

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*Come Worship
With us!*

**Saturdays
10:30 AM**
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