

THE MEANING OF THE PASSOVER SYMBOLS

By Kimberly Rogers

Passover is traditionally viewed as a Jewish holiday. It is, rather, a Biblical Feast that has been performed the same way for over 3,500 years starting with the Hebrews and Gentiles that left Egypt together during the first Exodus (Exodus 12:38).

Several items are placed on the Passover Seder (supper) plate. Each of these has specific meaning associated with our Messiah, Yeshua, and the Children of Abraham, also referred to as The Children of Israel.

Passover, as with all the Feasts, are associated with prophecies of Yeshua, both for His first coming and His second. There is great knowledge associated with the symbolism of the Passover and wonderful blessings for Believers who keep God's appointed times (moedim: pronounced *mow-ed-eem*) – the times He said we were to have "an appointment" with Him.

Lamb Shank bone:

The unbroken, unblemished shank bone reminds us of Yeshua's crucifixion in that it always remains an unbroken bone. During Roman times, ALL crucified people were to have their leg bones broken, but God gave the Messiah's unbroken legs as one of the signs of His identity because the Passover Lamb's bones were never broken (Exodus 12:46 and Numbers 9:12). Yeshua is our Passover Lamb.

John 19:36 For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.

So, it is that this bone represents first the miracle of the unbroken legs of our Messiah. Second, the shank bone also represents the outstretched arm of Adonai during the first Exodus, but even more astounding it represents how He will deliver us during the second Exodus yet to come. The second Exodus is referred to in Jeremiah 23:

Jeremiah 23:7 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that they shall no more say, The LORD liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt;

8 But, The LORD liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.

So, the shank bone refers to God's deliverance of His people at both ends of the ages.

Matzah (Unleavened Bread):

Unleavened bread has the properties in its appearance of being beaten, striped and bruised. For the last 3,500 years, these have represented Yeshua's physical state at the time of His crucifixion.

Each Seder table is provided with 3 Matzahs hidden in a 3-pocketed "napkin". One whole piece of Matzah is placed in each pocket. The 3 Matzah's represent God's 3 manifestations as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The first Matzah represents God, the Father. The middle Matzah represents Yeshua. At a point during the ritual, middle Matzah is broken, then hidden by adults to be found by children later at a specified time. The Matzah, Yeshua who is our unleavened bread, was broken for our sins, wrapped in a white burial cloth, placed in a tomb (hidden), and then arose from the dead (was found again). The hidden Matzah is called the "afikomen", a Greek word meaning "that which comes last". It also represents Yeshua's final return to earth. The 3rd Matzah represents the Holy Spirit.

Maror (Bitter Herbs):

Maror symbolizes the bitter lot of the Israelites during their enslavement in Egypt, but it also symbolizes the bondage and burdens we experience while living in the world (spiritual Egypt) before we asked Yeshua to accept us into His Kingdom.

Karpas & Salt Water:

The salt water is also used to symbolize the tears the Israelites shed while in slavery and the water they passed through when God divided the Red Sea. This passing through the Red Sea was the second step in their salvation process. The first was, of course, the acceptance of the Passover Lamb. All Believers are baptized as a confirmation of passing from one way of life – Gentile ways – to God's way of life – Hebrew ways.

1 Corinthians 10:2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

Roasted Egg:

It was interesting to me, when I first found the Messianic Movement and attended my first Passover, to discover how Satan had usurped a symbol given by God to His people for their understanding of His plan of salvation. The egg, which has nothing to do with bunnies, symbolizes new birth in Messiah Yeshua. The doctrine of being “born again” is a Torah doctrine that is symbolized this way at Passover.

Yeshua was amazed that Torah teacher and leader, Nicodemus, did not understand this doctrine.

John 3:1 *There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:*

2 *The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.*

3 *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

4 *Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?*

5 *Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

6 *That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

7 *Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*

8 *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

9 *Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?*

10 *Jesus answered and said unto him, **Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?***

You see, Nicodemus failed to fully comprehend the complete meaning of the life symbol of the Passover egg. It doesn't symbolize earthly life, but spiritual life – the life that is only found by becoming “Ivrit” like Abraham. Abraham was a Gentile who “crossed over” (the meaning of the word Ivrit) from his Gentile ways to God's ways. The word “Ivrit” is the ancient root word for “Hebrew”.

Charoset:

Charoset is a sweet ritual food that symbolizes the mortar the Children of Israel were compelled to make for their Egyptian taskmaster during their period of enslavement in Egypt. To the Believer, the Charoset reminds us that even the worst of circumstances can be sweetened when we have the hope of Messiah in our lives.

Passover, as with all God's appointed Feasts, is rife with symbolism that God gave us to deepen our walk with Him. Symbols speak louder than either words or pictures. And symbols are God's language. Practicing the rituals God gave us to remind us of His ways is how we gain the deeper knowledge of Him – called “the meat of the Word”.

Shalom,

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