

2017 Pesach Message

(Slide) Here is a picture of what's called "The Last Supper" by Leonardo da Vinci. This image, like many others has crept into your subconscious and it's lodged in there. Translators, scribes, pastors, priests, reformed rabbis, teachers, government agencies as well as artists and even film makers have misdirected, manipulated, distorted and reinvented Scripture for a long time. The situation is so bad, that it takes only a few seconds to begin sharing truth that even a veteran Nazarene has never heard before.

(Click) There is no such term, "The Last Supper" used to describe this well-known seder in Scripture. In fact, this was not the last meal that Yahshua had with his Talmidim. The last meal he had was a breakfast beside the shores of Galilee in his third official appearance after his resurrection. "Yahshua said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was Adonai. Yahshua came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time Yahshua appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead." (John 21:12-13)

The majority of religious world applies Scripture like a general practitioner using plastic toy medical tools and sugar tablets to treat patients with genuine illnesses.

(Slide) The meal Yahshua had with his Talmidim more than likely looked like this.

Most people think that Yahshua's last meal was a Pesach Seder? Certainly, you'd be forgiven for thinking that when we read, **(Slide)** "Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Pesach lamb had to be killed. Yahshua sent Kepha and Yochannan, saying, 'Go and make preparations for Passover so we may eat (it).'" (Luke 22:7-8)

"On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Yahshua's disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?" (Mark 14:12)

"On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Yahshua and asked, 'Where do you want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?'" (Matthew 26:17)

(Slide) But on the following day, after Yahshua's capture and when the Jewish leaders took Yahshua to see Pilate, they remained outside of his palace for fear of defiling themselves and making them ineligible "to eat the Passover" (John 18:28)

(Slide) Furthermore, Yahshua is presented by Pilate to the Jews on "...the day of Preparation of the Passover; (when) it was about noon (and Pilate said to the Jews) 'Here is your king.'" (John 19:14)

(Slide) Even the Talmud, a most unlikely source, attests that Yahshua was put to death on Erev Pesach:

"Yahshua was hanged on Erev Pesach. Forty days previously the herald had cried, "He is being led out for stoning, because he has practiced sorcery and led Yisrael astray and enticed them into apostasy. Whosoever has anything to say in his defense, let him come and declare it." As nothing was brought forward in his defense, he was hanged on Erev Pesach." Tractate Sanhedrin (43a)

The stoning is mentioned here, because according to Torah he should have been stoned, but the Roman occupation forbade Jews from enacting Capital Punishment according to their laws. So too, Yahshua had to die in some fashion involving the profuse loss of blood. Crucifixion accommodated that requirement much more effectively than stoning. So the Jewish writings provide an unintended confirmation of this event.

The eating of the Pesach commences at sundown on Abib or Nissan 15. Yahshua was crucified on Erev Pesach, the 14th of Nissan (Wednesday afternoon) between the 6th hour and the 9th hour (He was probably hung at around 11pm and died at 3pm, though Mark 15:25 say between the 3rd and 9th hour making it much earlier [9am]).

Yahshua's so-called "Last Supper" was on Tuesday night (the Erev of the Preparation Day of Pesach).

(Slide) Exodus 12 tells us the timing of the slaughter of the lambs. "Take care of (the first-born lambs) until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the members of the community of Yisrael must slaughter them at twilight. Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs." (Exodus 12:6-7)

The "Last Supper" was not a Pesach Seder. It was a meal that took place on the eve of the Preparation Day for Pesach. Just because Yahshua said for his talmidim to go and make preparations for Pesach, does not mean that he ate the actual Pesach or celebrated the actual Pesach that year. To do so would have caused him to miss arguably one of his most important prophetic appointments and in so doing endanger all of creation.

So what was this meal?

(Slide) This meal closed Ta'anit B'khorot (the Fast of the First-Born). Traditionally, the fast was broken by observing a siyum, a traditional meal that celebrates a completion of a unit of Torah learning. Siyum means "completion" or "finished."

Ta'anit B'khorot is reserved for the first born only. It commemorates the salvation of the Yisraelite firstborns during the Plague of the Firstborn, the tenth of the ten plagues which were wrought upon Ancient Egypt prior to the Exodus of the Children of Yisrael, when, according to Exodus (12:29): "...Elohim struck every firstborn in the Land of Mitzrayim..."

Furthermore, it was forbidden to partake of leavened bread so close to Pesach and it was also forbidden to partake of matzah at this time as well. All ancient kosher bake houses would have been well cleared of all leaven by then and it would have been impossible to acquire it at this time. What kosher bakery would have been operating to make leavened bread so close to Pesach? Also the partaking of matzah right before the Pesach Seder was forbidden, because it would make one less desirous for it, when the time came to perform the mitzvah. So, was it week-old stale kosher bread or bread acquired from a goy? Heaven forbid, it was neither.

So what bread did Yahshua use?

(Click) The bread Yahshua broke was called matzah ashirah. It was a matzah made from flour mixed with fruit juice or with eggs, which cannot be used to fulfill the obligation of eating

matzah at the Seder. Today, you can still buy matzah made with egg, but this is invalid if consumed by a healthy adult on Pesach, even though it's kosher to possess it then and throughout Unleavened Bread. It can be eaten at the pre-Passover meal and during the week of Unleavened Bread. However, it is permissible for a child or an elderly person to eat it for Pesach, because it is milder on the digestive system than straight matzah.

Did Yahshua Even Eat at the Seder?

Some Hebrew scholars go so far as to say that Yahshua didn't broke the Fast of the First Born at all during the so-called "Last Supper."

(Slide) But what about when Yahshua said, "I have greatly desired to eat this Pesach with you before I suffer. For I say to you that from now on I will not eat until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of Elohim." (Luke 22:15-16)

Answer: Yahshua makes his vow before he actual eats anything by saying "...from now on I will not eat until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of Elohim."

And what about later, when Yahshua said, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me." (Matthew 26:23)

Answer: He dipped his fingers in the bowl, because he handled the matzah ashirah.

What about Mark 14:20? "It is one of the Twelve," he replied, "one who dips bread into the bowl with me."

Answer: The original Greek doesn't have the word for bread. Just "dip" and the translators have assumed it's bread and not fingers, despite fingers corresponding to Matthew's account.

Furthermore, Yahshua says, "While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, 'Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me--one who is eating with me.'" (Mark 14:18)

Answer: "...one who is eating with me" The word for with is the Greek word Meta, which also mean behind or beside Yahshua, which makes more sense, because all the talmidim were eating with him.

Yahshua announces his intention to eat when he directs His Talmidim to explain to the owner of the residence "...where (he) may eat the Passover with my disciples?" (Luke 22:11)

Answer: Yahshua and his talmidim didn't observe a Pesach Seder and yet Yahshua calls it Pesach and so too he announces his intention to eat, yet does not eat.

Yahshua uses the siyum as a demonstration to share the midrashim, the deeper meaning of Pesach's elements. He uses the bread and wine to his talmidim as a symbol of his body and blood. The matzah was made without ego (puffiness), it was lean, striped, pierced and bruised, and mid-way through the seder it is broken, wrapped in cloth, hidden, retrieved and then shared around for everyone to eat. **(Slide)** This is called, the Afikomen. Afikomen is Greek and means, "that which comes after." It is a broken piece of matzah that is eaten after the main meal during the Pesach Seder. Interestingly, there is no other more obvious symbolism as the Afikomen anywhere in the Pesach Seder that points to Yahshua's suffering, death and resurrection than this and it is a 100% rabbinical tradition. I don't know what type of whacky Pesach that lady attended!

The matzah and wine, the singing of the Hallel, the reclining diners are all elements that were observed in the Last Supper. This meal followed much of the same order of a Pesach Seder described in the Mishnah. In the Netzarim Ketuvim synoptic Gospel accounts, we find reference to the First Cup, also known as the Cup of Blessing (Luke 22:17); to the breaking of the matzah (Luke 22:19); to the Third Cup, the Cup of Redemption (Luke 22:20); to reclining (Luke 22:14); to the charoseth or the maror (Matthew 26:23), and to the Hallel (Matthew 26:30).

What is more, just as Jews at the seder discuss the symbolism of the Pesach Seder, Yahshua at his siyum discussed the symbolism of the wine and bread in light of his own imminent death.

Pesach's Evolution

Years ago I read a message by a woman on-line who attended Pesach Seder and said that she had a great time at the Seder, because there was nothing rabbinical observed. I nearly fell out of my chair!

(Slide) There is perhaps no other High Holiday that has been so woven together with rabbinic tradition than the observance of Pesach. The custom of reading through the Pesach Haggadah (the telling) is a booklet of information compiled by rabbis that sets out the order of service that accompanies the meal. I have never been to a Messianic Passover Seder that operates without one. There are almost as many varieties of Pesach Haggadot as there are stars in the sky and all of them are sourced from rabbinic texts. In Biblical times, no-one relied on a written document to power the Seder, because everything was clearly in the minds of those leading it.

Once the Yisraelites were settled in Yisrael, and once a Temple was built in Yerushalayim, the original Pesach Korban described in Exodus 12 changed dramatically. Pesach became one of the Jewish Pilgrimage festivals, and Yisraelites were expected to travel to Yerushalayim to offer a Passover lamb at the Temple during the afternoon of the 14th day, and then consume the Pesach Korban once the sun had set, with the festival formally beginning on the 15th of Nissan. This kind of celebration is described as having taken place during the reigns of Kings Hezekiah and Josiah (2 Chronicles 30 and 35).

Order of Service

As time passed, the practice continued to evolve. Eventually, a number of customs, recorded in rabbinic literature, began to accumulate around the meal, which became so highly ritualised that it developed into what was known as a Pesach Seder. The word Seder means "arrangement" or "order" and shares the same Hebrew root as siddur, usually denoting a prayer book. The Pesach Seder refers to the arrangement and order of breaking unleavened bread, drinking wine, reclining and singing nigunim (melodies). Furthermore, during the meal, the Exodus story was retold and the significance of the unleavened bread, bitter herbs and wine was explained.

Reclining

(Slide) “So the disciples did as YahShua had directed them and prepared the Passover. When evening came, YahShua was reclining at the table with the Twelve.” (Matthew 26:19, 20)

Reclining was standard practice in large official royal meals. Rashbam explains the reason we recline altogether is because such was the manner of kings and that the aristocrats reclined on the left so as to leave the right hand free for eating purposes.

Leaning on the left side represents the fact that on the night of Passover, even the “left side,” which is associated with darkness and death, can be elevated. (This idea is stated regarding the fact that the Menorah is lit on the left side of the door and that the Tefillin are worn on the left arm.)

The Mishnah in Berakhot makes that very clear from its distinction between people who “happen to sit down to eat” a meal (hayu yoshebhin leekhol), who make the benediction individually and those who “recline” (hesebhu) who are required to have one make the benediction for the rest (Berakhoth 6:6). Thus, the injunction to recline should not be seen as the ad-hoc creation of a practice in order to demonstrate freemen, upperclass behavior. Rather it’s taking a practice that already commonly exists and instructing that on the night of Passover even the poor man should recline himself while eating, as if he were a rich man (Pesachim 10:1).

In his commentary to the Mishnah in Pesachim, Maimonides adds: In the manner that kings and important people eat.

When reclining, one should lean to the left, eating and drinking with the right hand. Even one who is left-handed should follow this practice.

Leaven in the Camp

Now, not long after Yahshua makes his declaration of his desire to eat the Pesach, there appears to be a tense disagreement among his Talmidim. **(Slide)** “And there was also a strife among them, who of them should be accounted the greatest. (Luke 22:24)

This tells us that there was still leaven present within Yahshua’s inner circle, there was still a puffiness in the attitude of his talmidim. Now, be careful not to judge them. Yahshua had taken them through many strange encounters and emerged triumphantly each time, vanquishing the dark forces wherever they reared up. It would have been extremely difficult to not let some of Yahshua’s notoriety and their association with him to go a little bit to their heads.

We see that this wasn’t the first time that a disagreement about this subject had occurred. “An argument started among the talmidim as to which of them would be the greatest. Yahshua knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside him. Then he said to them, “Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For it is the one who is least among you all who is the greatest.” (Luke 9: 46-48)

HaSatan uses this to whisper accusations to Yahshua against all his 12 companions. ‘They hear but never learn, You told them to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and yet they carry on like them. Test, what I’m saying, leave them alone, but for a moment and they will all sleep! I have every legal right to sift them like wheat!

Here is a depiction of Yahshua's great faith. In the natural, here was a guy with his own problems, he was about to get tortured, beaten, humiliated and slowly killed and he had to quell the egos of his talmidim. How does he do this? "And (Yahshua) said to them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and those who exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But you shall not be so: but he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he who is chief, as he who serves. For who is greater, he who sits at meat, or he who serves? Is not he who sits at meat? But I am among you as he who serves. You are those who have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint to you a kingdom, as my Father has appointed to me; That you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Luke 22:25-30)

Netilat Reglayim (Washing of Feet)

Then Yahshua proceeds to wash his talmidim's feet, despite the fact that the verse says, "the supper being ended." This is because the correct rendering should be the supper "being born" or "come into existence."

(Slide) Since the Yisraelites wore sandals instead of shoes, and as they usually went barefoot in the house, frequent washing of the feet was a necessity. Hence among the Yisraelites it was the first duty of the host to give his guest water for the washing of feet "Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I entered your house, you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.'" (Luke 7:44) Washing of feet for guests is also mentioned in Genesis 18:4 & 19:2, Judges 19:21, and 1st Samuel 25:41.

In fact, everyone at the seder would have already washed their own feet before they reclined. Rebbe Yahshua instituted this custom of washing feet as an act of humility. The washing of feet for Pesach was not formerly a tradition. Yahshua instituted this as an illustration of removing leaven from the soul. "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and rabbi; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your rabbi and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them." (John 13:12-17)

(Slide) In the Divine Emanation of the Attributes of Yahweh (The Sefirot [The Tree of Life]), the Netzach and Hod are likened to the two feet of a person i.e. the right and left foot. The feet are usually only the means for a person's activity.

Chasidic Judaism's view of Hod is that it is connected with Jewish prayer. Prayer is seen as form of "submission"; Hod is explained as an analogy - that instead of "conquering" an obstacle in one's way, (which is the idea of Netzach), subduing oneself to that "obstacle" is related to the quality of Hod. By washing both Hod and Nezach, which means "victory," Yahshua is demonstrating that humility leads one to victory.

(Slide) Next up is the betrayal. A betrayal is defined as an act of deliberate disloyalty. "...the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some way to get rid of Yahshua, for they were afraid of the people. Then HaSatan (The Accuser) entered Y'udah, called the Ishcariot ("the man who reads the written word only"), one of the Twelve. And Y'udah went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how

he might betray Yahshua. They were delighted and agreed to give him money. He consented, and watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present.” (Luke 22:2-6)

Unfortunately, the Scriptures are rife with acts of betrayal. In fact, when someone sins in a way that comes from anger of disillusionment toward Elohim, this is an act of betrayal.

Turning on one another is one of the most loathsome sins imaginable.

Today, if a community had a Pesach Seder with all the elements of the pre-Pesach Seder of Yahshua and his talmidim, it would be hands down considered a complete disaster of a night. Why? Because the house seemed to be commandeered at the last minute, the talmidim argued about who was better, the host identifies the man who would lead him to be killed the following day and also predicts another’s denial of him during the ordeal. The host also commands that his talmidim to arm themselves with weapons and at key points in the night Yahshua’s followers are largely offended and confused.

Okay, there are many other things about this event I wish to share, but they will have to be for another time. I will end with this.

The Hallel

Toward the end of the seder Yahshua and his talmidim sing a hymn. “When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.” (Matthew 26:30) Many Christian scholars have deliberated over the song that was sung, but there is no mystery to one who is familiar with the custom of the Jews.

It was the Hallel (meaning “jubilation”) which is comprised of Psalms 113 to 118. We know this, because the Levitical Choir sang the Hallel during the Pesach Korban. Also, the Talmud, which teaches extensively about Jewish life and customs in the first century, states that during the Pesach Seder, four cups of wine would be drunk, and the singing of the Hallel would begin after the second cup, with Psalm 113 being the first hymn sung followed by Psalm 114. After the fourth and final cup of wine had been drunk, the remaining psalms of the Hallel – 115, 116, 117, and 118 – were then sung.

The Hallel was to be recited at the Pesach Seder in honour of Divine Deliverance or which the seder is a 100% deliverance-based meal.

By knowing that the Hallel was song between cups at the seder and that Moshiach and his Talmidim departed immediately after singing, we can surmise that they certainly sang the last part of the Hallel, chapter 118. This is significant, because Yahshua had to be offered up at the same time as the first-born lambs in the Temple in the 9th hour, which would have been 2 to 3pm the following day. So the same hour Yahshua died, the Levitical Choir’s rendition of Hallel could be heard for miles around Yerushalayim and on the concluding section, Psalm 118, he gave us his life.

If you were to go back in time to see Yahshua’s crucifixion, you’d have seen the Levi’im on special platforms singing the Hillel and playing instruments as lambs were being slaughtered in front of them in the inner court. There were 12 singers and more than 160 musicians

gathered as orderly rows of people came forward with their lambs. Out of the Eastern Gate of the Beit HaMikdash and straight up to the top of the Mount of Olives in a place called Skull Hill, a rabbi and two Jewish Zealots were being hung.

Just as Yahshua was dying, chapter 118 of Psalms, the last stanza, was being sung by twelve powerfully voiced singers accompanied by 160 instruments and these words echoed in the hauntingly distance:

“Give thanks to Yahweh, for he is good; his love endures forever. Let Israel say: “His love endures forever.” Let the house of Aaron say: “His love endures forever.” Let those who fear Yahweh say: “His love endures forever.” When hard pressed, I cried to Yahweh; he brought me into a spacious place. Yahweh is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me? Yahweh is with me; he is my helper. I look in triumph on my enemies. It is better to take refuge in Yahweh than to trust in humans. It is better to take refuge in Yahweh than to trust in princes. All the nations surrounded me, but in the name of Yahweh I cut them down. They surrounded me on every side, but in the name of Yahweh I cut them down. They swarmed around me like bees, but they were consumed as quickly as burning thorns; in the name of Yahweh I cut them down. I was pushed back and about to fall, but Yahweh helped me. Yahweh is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation. Shouts of joy and victory resound in the tents of the righteous: Yahweh’s right hand has done mighty things! Yahweh’s right hand is lifted high; Yahweh’s right hand has done mighty things!” I will not die but live, and will proclaim what Yahweh has done. Yahweh has chastened me severely, but he has not given me over to death. Open for me the gates of the righteous; I will enter and give thanks to Yahweh. This is the gate of Yahweh through which the righteous may enter. I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation. The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; Yahweh has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes. Yahweh has done it this very day; let us rejoice today and be glad. Yahweh, save us! Yahweh, grant us success! Blessed is he who comes in the name of Yahweh. From the house of Yahweh we bless you. Yahweh is Elohim, and he has made his light shine on us. With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar. You are my Elohim, and I will praise you; you are my Elohim, and I will exalt you. Give thanks to Yahweh, for he is good; his love endures forever.”

“...Messiah, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast.” (1 Corinthians 5:7-8)