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Unleavened
Bread



Fruit of
the Vine

Emblems of Passover

YAIY



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Our Mission and purpose is to reach people around the world with the message of the revealed personal Names of Yahweh and His Son Yahshua the Messiah, as well as teaching the salvation truths that have been neglected for centuries.

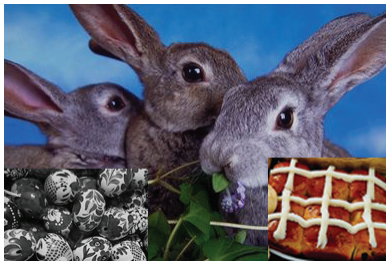
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Passover

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Passover and Your Future

Passover is a monumental event that took place in Egypt long ago when the Israelites were being oppressed by slavemasters. It foreshadows a yet future event that has very similar circumstances. Yahshua the Messiah spoke of a coming fulfillment of the Passover.

Passover is a culmination of 10 plagues Yahweh brought on Egypt. Moses was sent to deliver the children of Israel to a land "flowing with milk and honey." Pharaoh repeatedly refused to allow the Israelites to leave. Yahweh brought increasingly severe plagues of which the Passover was the most severe.

Progressive Severity of the Plagues

The first plague was turning the water into blood. This was an inconvenience, as the Egyptians could find water by digging wells. Next came a plague of frogs, which was again rather more of a nuisance than a calamity. This was followed by a plague of lice or sand fleas, then flies. When the plague struck the cattle the Egyptians began to worry.

Later, the Egyptians received body boils. Next, their crops were ruined by hail, wiping out the spring harvest. A plague of locusts ate the remaining crops. The ninth plague was three days of total darkness. The Egyptians were not able to leave their houses. All industry and commerce stopped. The tenth plague was the Passover.

At the fourth plague Yahweh distinguished His people Israel from the Egyptians. The Israelites living in the land of Goshen were spared any future plagues. Yahweh told His people what they must do to avoid the terrible judgment that was coming upon the Egyptian nation. He passed over His obedient people but sent judgment on the Egyptians living about them.

Moses related to Pharaoh what was about to happen. All the firstborn of both humans and cattle were to die, from those of Pharaoh down to the slaves,

And Moses said, Thus saith Yahweh, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts, Exodus 11:4-5.

Yahweh's people were to identify themselves by killing a lamb and taking the blood and applying it to their doorposts and lintel. They were then to roast the lamb with bitter herbs and eat it that night, making sure that which was left over was burned the next morning. If a household were too small to consume the entire lamb, two families were to keep Passover together.

And ye shall keep it (sheep or goat) up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Yahweh's Passover, Ex 12:6-11.

At Passover, Yahweh executed judgment against the false religions of the Egyptians. Yahweh was showing that He is in complete control and that His worship is distinctly different from the pagan deities of Egypt,

For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the idols of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am Yahweh, Exodus 12:12.

Most of the plagues in some way upbraided an Egyptian deity. For instance, they worshiped the Nile, frogs, cattle, and insects.

Passover was to be observed by entire families. It is to teach us and our children that His judgment will soon come upon this world's false religions. The word "Passover" refers to Yahweh's "passing over" those homes that had been marked with blood. The people were eating the lamb in fear of Yahweh's warning that they should stay inside for protection.

Many today do not believe that Yahweh would smite with death animals and people. They picture Him as a kindly, doting grandfather who puts up with the whims of His spoiled children and does nothing to punish them. The truth is, Yahweh punished even believers with sickness and death for careless observance of the Passover,

For I have received of Yahweh that which also I delivered unto you, that the Master Yahshua the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Master's death till He come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Master, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Master. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Master's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be

judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Master, that we should not be condemned with the world, 1 Corinthians 11:23-32.

It is most probable that Yahshua was taken captive at about the same night the ancient Passover took place. His doom was sealed from that time until He was impaled the following afternoon. He was as good as dead from the time He was apprehended.

Passover – Once a year

The Passover and feast days are all listed in Leviticus 23. These are annual observances to be kept as "a statute forever," according to Yahweh's Word.

In the first month, in the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have the Passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten, Ezekiel 45:21.

This Scripture tells us that the Passover is to be kept on the 14th of the first month. This chapter 45 of Ezekiel begins with a new dividing of the land, with a special section for the temple. Therefore we know this is a time yet future because the divisions of the land are not the same as they were under Joshua.

We also know from Zechariah 14 verse 16 to the end of the chapter that the Feast of Tabernacles, an annual observance, will be kept:

And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, Yahweh of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, Yahweh of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith Yahweh will smite the heathen that come not up to keep

the Feast of Tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO YAHWEH; and the pots in Yahweh's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto Yahweh of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of Yahweh of hosts.

Isaiah 66:23 tells us that all mankind will come to worship Yahweh on His Sabbaths:

And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith Yahweh.

Notice that "sabbath" is plural. It means more than merely the weekly Sabbath and includes all of the other annual sabbaths as well.

Yahshua Himself said in the New Testament that He would be keeping the Passover again in the Kingdom. This can be found in Matthew 26:28-29, Mark 14:25, and Luke 22:15-18. It is obvious from both the Old and New Testaments that the Passover will be kept when the Messiah returns to rule. And it will be kept with a new and deeper understanding.

Must One Wait to Learn?

There is no place in Scripture telling us to sit and wait for perfect instruction. There are many places, however, admonishing us to prepare ourselves and become righteous to be accounted worthy to be part of that first resurrection. If we don't obey now, we will not even be in that first resurrection.

Scriptures like 2 Corinthians 11:1-2 and Revelation 19:8-9 admonish the bride to prepare herself for

the marriage. Her linen is made of the good deeds of the saints. Ephesians 5:26-27 commands us to be converted and motivated by Yahweh's Word so that we might become a glorious assembly, having neither spot nor wrinkle, holy and without blemish:

That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious assembly, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Passover Meaning For Us Today

The plagues brought upon the Egyptians are similar to those mentioned in the Book of Revelation. Revelation 16 significantly points out the similarities of the plagues in Egypt with those that will be brought upon this earth. Just as the Egyptian plagues were directed at pagan deities, so the future plagues will be directed against false worship. Colossians 2:16-17 tells us the sabbaths are a shadow of things yet to come:

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come; but the body of Messiah.

First Passover Portrays Future One

1 Peter 1:13-21 speak of exactly this. Verse 19, especially, says that we are redeemed *"with the precious blood of Messiah, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."*

Romans 5 also brings this fact to our attention, especially in verse 9: *Much more then, being justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.* Here again, it is the blood of the greater Lamb that will save us from Yahweh's anger. Revelation 18:4-5 alludes to this

greater Passover,

And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her My people that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven and Yahweh has remembered her iniquities."

Only after you realize the necessity of observing Yahweh's commanded days like Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread, casting off the false worship of modern Egypt, will Yahweh's blessing and protection come to you, just as they did for the Israelites thousands of years before.

Feast of Unleavened Bread The Meaning of Leavening

Because we live in a physical world, Yahweh impresses lessons upon us that we learn only through physical activity. Our minds do not always retain many of the spiritual truths we have learned because of our fallibility. We often cannot recall the dates of some of the most memorable occasions in our lives. How many husbands forget such an all-important event as their wedding anniversary?

When Yahweh gave Israel His special holy days, He prescribed their observance with some acts to perform to make them more memorable. Before the death and resurrection of the Messiah, animal sacrifices were a part of worship even on the Sabbath day,

This is the burnt offering of every sabbath, beside the continual burnt offering, and His drink offering, Numbers 28:10.

However, these sacrifices pointed to the great sacrifice by Yahshua and are done away in Him, Hebrews 10:1-10.

While the way a holy day is observed may be changed, the obser-

vance of the day itself continues. The weekly Sabbath and annual holy days (Unleavened Bread) will also be kept even after the Messiah returns to rule, Isaiah 66:23, Ezekiel 45:21.

Unleavened Bread Follows Passover

Immediately following the Passover observance, Yahweh commanded the Feast of Unleavened Bread,

Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you. And ye shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land. Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread, Exodus 12:15-20.

The Days of Unleavened Bread were also a part of the Old Covenant,

Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto Me in the year. Thou shalt keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of

the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty;), Exodus 23:14-15.

What is the meaning of these days, and what is the New Testament believer supposed to do during this time?

Ancient Israel was told to keep the Passover as a day of remembrance and to celebrate it as a Feast in Yahweh's honor forever,

And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to Yahweh throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever, Exodus 12:14.

It commemorated the deliverance of Yahweh's people from the destroying angel because they had applied the blood of the lamb to their doors and lintels.

Immediately following that, they were to keep seven days during which they were to eat no leavened bread, nor were they to have any leaven in their houses, Exodus 12:15-20. Verse 17 says it is to be kept from age to age as an irrevocable ordinance. Anyone eating leavened bread during this time was to be cut off from the community of Israel.

The Assembly at Corinth was undoubtedly the most worldly and paganized of all the groups Paul worked with. They were very cosmopolitan, and proud of their liberal and enlightened attitude of humanistic tolerance. Most Bible scholars contend they were not Israelites, but were of Gentile origin. They had just come out of heathenism, but carried some pagan, idolatrous ways into the Corinthian Assembly.

There was incest, and Paul scolds them for their obvious pride in tolerating a man having his father's wife. He tells them to remove such a man from among them so that he will come to his senses and repent. But the interesting point is that Paul makes an analogy to the leavening power of yeast working in the Assembly.

He uses it here in a bad sense, *The pride that you take in yourselves is hardly to your credit. You must know how even a small amount of yeast is enough to leaven all the dough, so get rid of all the old yeast, and make yourselves into a completely new batch of bread, unleavened as you are meant to be. Messiah, our Passover, has been sacrificed; let us celebrate the feast, then, by getting rid of all the old yeast of evil and wickedness, having only the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth,* 1 Corinthians 5:6-8, Jerusalem Bible.

Is Leaven Sin?

Exactly what is the meaning of leaven? Is yeast representative of something bad? Does it stand for sin, wickedness, and corruption? Or does it represent being "puffed up" as some teach?

If leaven is used in Scripture as evil, then we should never eat it, but avoid it entirely. Neither would it ever be allowed in any offering to Yahweh. Yet, we find that in Leviticus 23:17 leaven is to be placed in the two wave loaves offered at Pentecost:

Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; they are the firstfruits unto Yahweh.

Also, Leviticus 7:13 shows leaven used in the cakes of the praise offering to Yahweh:

Besides the cakes, he shall offer for his offering leavened bread with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace offerings.

Yahshua spoke to His disciples in a parabolic discourse in Matthew 13, using many extended metaphors about the Kingdom. In verses 31-32 (*Another parable put He forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it*

is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.)

He likened the mustard seed to the Kingdom. In verse 33 He said, *The Kingdom of Heaven is like the yeast a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour till it was leavened all through,* Jerusalem Bible.

If leaven or yeast is representative of sin, wickedness, and corruption, then how could Yahshua say the Kingdom of Heaven is like leaven? Do we not read in Scripture that the Kingdom is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit, Romans 14:17?

For the kingdom of Yahweh is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

The Pharisees and Sadducees came testing Yahshua and asked for a sign from heaven in Matthew 16:1. Rather than exercise His supernatural power for their benefit, Yahshua upbraids them for not observing the signs of the times. Then adds that there will no sign be given except the sign of Jonah, Matthew 16:4. He abruptly left after that exchange and went on to the other side of the lake. Yahshua then says to be aware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, Matthew 16:6.

The disciples reason that He was chiding them for not bringing along any bread. He plainly reminds them of the feeding of the 5,000 and the later feeding of the 4,000 with baskets of surplus bread remaining. Plainly He tells them, *Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees,* verse 11. Then it dawns on the disciples. Yahshua is speaking about the doctrine or teaching of His critics.

Leaven—Both Kinds of Doctrine

If we understand leaven to mean

a doctrine or influence, we will be on safe ground. It can be an influence for good or for evil. Matthew 15:14 (*"Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."*) shows that the perverse doctrine of the religious leaders threatens to misguide those for whom they are responsible. This Yahshua tells His disciples to watch for.

Note the three types He specifically calls attention to: 1) Religious hypocrisy in external ceremonialism was evident with the Pharisees, Matthew 23:14, 16, and 28; 2) A skeptical attitude toward the spirit realm was the leaven of the Sadducees, Matthew 22:23, 29; and 3) The spirit of worldly compromise, political guile, and formalism was the leaven of the Herodians, Matthew 22:16-21, Mark 3:6.

In the warm countries around Palestine, leaven would spring up spontaneously in a lump of dough. In the tepid climate of Syria, 24 hours was sufficient for a mass of dough to become thoroughly leavened, according to Hastings' Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.

Leaven is that which produces fermentation in a mass of dough. In Hebrew it is *seor*. From this we get our word "sour." Physical leaven putrefies. It breaks down flour, causing decay or disintegration in the dough. Rabbinical writers often used leaven as a symbol of man's hereditary corruption.

There are, however, two verses in Leviticus stating that the showbread contains leaven (23:17) and the praise offering already mentioned (7:13).

An interesting comment is made in the New Testament where Yahshua speaks of the Kingdom of Heaven as being like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of meal,

Another parable spake He unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman

took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened, Matthew 13:33.

These verses show that leaven has a more symbolic meaning, as revealed by Yahshua in alluding to the pervasive character of leaven as it works slowly and surely until the whole lump is leavened. Paul stated the same in Galatians 5:9:

A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

Patrick Fairbairn in *The Typology of Scripture* observes, "There can be no doubt that leavened bread was used in ordinary life by the covenant people, without apparently suggesting any idea of corruption. It is thought to be more natural and altogether more in accordance with the original prohibition of leaven, to understand by it simply the old, that which savored of the state of things to be done away, whereas the unleavened was the new, the fresh, the unmixed, consequently pure," p. 312.

Further, he says, "The putting away of the leaven, that there might be the use only of unleavened bread, may also be regarded as carrying some respect to the circumstances of the people at the first institution of the Feast. And on this account it seems to be called 'the bread of affliction' (Deut. 16:3), because of the trembling haste and anguish of spirit amid which their departure was taken from Egypt. But there can be no doubt that it mainly pointed, as already shown in connection with the meat-offering, to holiness in heart and conduct, which became the ransomed people of Yahweh—the uncorrupt sincerity and truth that should appear in all their behavior. Hence, while the bitter herbs were only to be eaten with the lamb itself, the unleavened bread was to be used through the whole seven days of the Feast, the primary sabbatical circle, as a sign that the religious moral purity which it imaged was to be their abiding and settled charac-

ter."

Accept Blood, Remove Falsity

If we understand leaven to mean doctrine or influence for good or evil, then we can see the fuller meaning of Yahweh's command to Israel to eat unleavened bread for seven days.

Yahweh was redeeming a people for Himself as He brought the 10 plagues upon Egypt. Each of the plagues was directed against a pagan deity worshiped by the Egyptians. As Israel had been redeemed by the blood struck on their doorposts and lintels, they were now to leave the influence of pagan Egypt behind and for seven days eat only unleavened bread. On the last day of Unleavened Bread, Israel marched through the Red Sea and was forever free of the Egyptians.

No wonder Paul said in his letter to the Corinthians that they should purge out the old leaven—that old doctrine of tolerating sin and wickedness right in the Assembly at Corinth.

They were to be a new lump, untainted from the attitudes and influences of the wicked. He adds,

For even Messiah our Passover is sacrificed for us, therefore, let us keep the Feast, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, 1 Corinthians 5:7-8.

We also are to keep the Passover as did Yahshua and His apostles once a year. Then we are to take all the leavened products out of our homes and eat unleavened bread each day of the Days of Unleavened Bread:

Seven days shall you eat unleavened bread, Leviticus 23:6.

This is to remind us each year we are to examine all the doctrines we believe and follow, performing a "spring housecleaning" of what we have accepted as truth.

We first accept the shed blood of the Savior and then put out all the false ideas and erroneous doctrines so that we believe and follow the words of Yahweh with sincerity and truth.

Just as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, so we should seek the truth of the Bible without any hypocrisy, without worldly compromising with Scripture, without doubting Yahweh's truth. Each year we become a "new lump" from the bread of life.

The Passover Cup What's in It, What It Represents

The contents of the Passover cup symbolize the blood of Yahshua the Messiah shed for remission of sin. But the New Testament doesn't say specifically what the cup contains, other than "fruit of the vine." Is it simply a matter of conscience, then, whether either wine or grape juice is used during the Passover memorial?

Because this fruit of the vine represents the very sinless blood of Yahshua, what is used is very important.

In studying the Old Testament account of the Passover, we find no particular drink is mentioned. The Israelites were simply told to kill a year-old lamb or goat, apply its blood to their doorposts and lintels and roast the animal whole. They were to eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Only later did the Jews add the custom of drinking wine at the Passover.

To say that the Messiah gave specifically wine to His disciples at Passover simply cannot be proved from Scripture. And there is no command in the Old Testament to use wine in the Passover observance.

When the annual Passover arrived, the disciples and Yahshua

sat around the table in an upper room. There they partook of the Passover (Matt. 26:17-25). This was a rather long ceremony because they reviewed the account of the Israelites' exodus from Egypt in addition to partaking of the Passover.

And as they were eating, Yahshua took bread and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink all of it; for this is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins," Matthew 26:26-28.

From Luke we read this account:

And He took bread and gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them saying, "This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me," Luke 22:19.

Notice that the last phrase from Luke shows new significance was added to the service. Yahshua was instituting a new commemoration of the old Passover. The old service was observed to commemorate the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt. However, on this new occasion Yahshua broke bread and asked His disciples to partake of it with new significance. Before that day had ended, Yahshua would die as the sacrifice that would deliver man from the bondage of sin. His body would be broken and His blood would be shed. The emblems of this memorial supper are to be taken to remember this great sacrifice.

With the new institution of the Master's Supper, it is obvious that Yahshua and the disciples had "the fruit of the vine." The way Yahshua introduced it into the ceremony shows that it had been used with the eating of the Passover. Nothing in the law of Moses regarding wine used in "drink offerings" (or any custom developed for using

wine in Passover) has any bearing on our observance of the Passover Yahshua instituted.

It is important that we determine which is the appropriate symbol for His shed blood—the fruit of the vine—for the service.

Wine is the Greek *Oynos*

This is not to say that Yahshua never mentioned wine to His disciples. In Matthew 9:17 He discusses wine (No. 3631, Strong's Concordance—*oynos*):

Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.

He mentions bursting of the wineskins in referring to the strong drink, implying fermentation. This also can be corroborated in Mark 2:22 and Luke 5:37-39. There is no doubt that Yahshua mentioned fermented and intoxicating wine.

Peter, in Acts 2:13, mentioned wine, but a different word is used here. He said that these men that were speaking in tongues were not full of new wine as they had supposed. Here the word "wine" is No. 1098 in Strong's Concordance—*gleukos*, and means a sweet or new wine or must. Peter's accusation shows that it was an intoxicant.

Oynos Means Fermented Wine

Paul uses *oynos* in Ephesians 5:18 and implies one could get drunk on it. In 1 Timothy 3:3 and 8, he also admonishes those who aspire to an office in the Assembly should not be given to wine (*oynos*). In 1 Timothy 5:23, Paul shows that a little wine is helpful to stomach problems. He again brings up wine in Titus 1:7 and 2:3. These passages clearly show that Paul is willing to use the word *oynos* when speaking of wine.

Messiah Refers to *Gennema*

But the Messiah never referred to the cup as containing *oynos*. He simply said "fruit of the vine," *gennema* in the Greek. In Matthew 26:27b-28 (NIV) the writer refers only to the cup, with Yahshua saying:

Drink all of this, for this is My blood of the Covenant which is to be poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

No mention of wine. Certainly, if Yahshua wanted us to drink wine for the Passover He would have said so. *Gennema* literally means "offspring" or by analogy, "produce." It is translated either fruit or generation.

Paul Uses "Cup of Blessing"

In 1 Corinthians 10:14-22, Paul refers to the cup as simply a cup of blessing. He asks, is it not a communion of the blood of Messiah? And the bread we broke, is it not a communion of the body of Messiah? In verse 21 (*You cannot drink the cup of the Master and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Master's table and the table of demons*, NIV.) Paul says that we cannot drink the cup of Yahshua and the cup of demons. We cannot eat at the table of Yahshua and the table of demons. Notice he does not here refer to the cup as containing anything. He simply refers to it as a cup of blessing (thanksgiving – verse 16).

In 1 Corinthians 11:25, Paul refers to the cup after supper and quotes Yahshua, *This cup is the New Covenant in My blood. Whenever you drink it, do this as a memorial of Me*. Until Yahshua comes, therefore, every time you eat this bread and drink this cup you are proclaiming His death and so anyone who eats the bread and drinks the cup of Yahshua unworthily will be behaving unworthily toward the body and blood of the Messiah.

Paul goes on in 1 Cor 10:28 (*But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is Yahweh's, and the fulness thereof.*) and says we are to be very careful in our eating of the bread and drinking from the cup because whoever eats and drinks without recognizing Yahshua's body is eating and drinking it to his own condemnation. He explains that this is the reason so many are weak and ill and some have died.

In none of these verses in which Paul mentions the Passover and partaking of the memorial supper does he refer to the cup's contents. He did not use *oynos* anywhere in referring to the memorial supper. He simply says that it is the cup of blessing or the cup of remembrance. Of the many times Paul referred to wine (*oynos*), it is quite clear that Paul was not a bit afraid of using that word when he discussed *oynos*.

Paul clearly said in 1 Timothy 3:3 that those aspiring to the ministry should not be given to wine or much wine. He also told Timothy in 1 Timothy 5:23 to use a little wine to help his stomach problems (*Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.*). Evidently Timothy had some digestive problems and Paul recommended that a little wine would be helpful. We find that Paul also admonished Titus in the same manner in the first and second chapters about not drinking too much wine. Paul was not afraid of using the word wine (*oynos*), when necessary. But nowhere does he say that the cup of the memorial supper contained *oynos*.

Abuse of Pre-Passover Meal

In 1 Corinthians 11:20 (*When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Master's Supper.*), Paul charged the people

with not keeping the Passover in the proper way. At that time the Body met together and evidently had a meal together before they partook of the Passover.

Paul says he is upset because they are not keeping Yahshua's memorial supper! They are keeping something else with an entirely wrong attitude and for this he condemns them. In verse 22 (*What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the assembly of Yahweh, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.*), he asks them whether they don't have homes for eating and drinking. He says they are shaming the community of Yahweh and embarrassing the poor.

He, evidently from this example, recommended that the brethren get together without any supper beforehand. Some of the early writers called this "*agape* supper." Paul soon told them that this was not what they should be doing. Some were eating all they could eat and drink and actually getting drunk. It is obvious that the reason for stopping the people from having the "*agape* supper" before partaking of the bread and the cup was that they were abusing and misusing what they were given to do.

Grape Juice Preserved 12 Months

There are some who teach that grapes naturally have enzymes that will cause grape juice to ferment to wine. Fermentation is caused by yeast spores that lie on the skins of the grapes. If the grape is left intact with the skin unbroken, it will dry up and turn into a raisin.

However, if the skin is broken the yeast spores may be mixed with grape juice unless the skins are thoroughly washed first. It is possible to keep grape juice for a period of six to nine months without having it ferment.

<see Passover page 22>

The Fullness of the Gentiles

The Multitude of Nations and the Greater Exodus

Traditionally, the phrase, “Until the Fullness of the Gentiles has come in,” has meant, “The Messiah won’t return until the whole world has had the opportunity to hear the Evangel.” But, Paul describes this phrase as a “mystery.” What’s so mysterious about taking the Word of Yahweh to the whole world? In fact, this traditional understanding has nothing to do with what Paul is trying to teach us. So entrenched is the world in its religious traditions that it cannot see what is printed in black and white, right in front of them. Anyone can see, if they would only read Scripture for what IT says; that is, for what Yahweh says.

For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the Fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written [in Isaiah 59:20, 21]: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away unrighteousness from Jacob [figuratively, all Israel]; for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins," Romans 11:25-27 NKJV.

Will All Israel Be Saved?

Ever wonder what mystery Paul was talking about here, the “Fullness of the Gentiles”? It must be extremely important, as he is connecting the “Fullness of the Gentiles” to the salvation of ALL Israel; and I take All Israel means ALL 12 Tribes.

The word “Gentiles” in the phrase, “the Fullness of the Gentiles,” is the Greek word, *ethnos*, which is identical to and clearly reflects Paul’s use of the Hebrew word, “*Goyim*,” which has also been translated “heathens,” “peoples” and “nations.” In like manner, the word “fullness” is the Greek word, *pleroma*, and has the same meaning as the Hebrew word, *malo*, which means “fullness” and is translated “multitude” in Genesis 48:17-19:

Now when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him; so he took hold of his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. And Joseph said to his father, "Not so, my father, for this one [Manasseh] is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head." But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He [Manasseh] also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother [Ephraim]

shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations." [*malo haGoyim* – the fullness of the Gentiles.]

The “Fullness of the Gentiles” – Not “When” But “Who”

So, Ephraim will become the *malo haGoyim* – the fullness of the Gentiles! Is this the mystery that Paul was speaking of, pertaining to the salvation of all Israel? Well, of course it is!

Ephraim, is Strong’s #OT:669, the dual form of *Ephrath*, which means “fruitfulness” or “double fruit”; and, *Ephrathah* is another name for Bethlehem.

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the one to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting." Therefore He shall give them up, until the time that she who is in labor has given birth; then the remnant of His brethren shall return to the children of Israel. And He shall stand and feed His flock in the strength of Yahweh, in the majesty of the name of Yahweh His Elohim; and they shall abide, for now He shall be great to the ends of the earth; and this one shall be peace, Micah 5:2-5 NKJV.

Is it a coincidence that the name of the town in which Yahshua was born means, “Fruitfulness”? I think not. Who is the firstfruit? It is Yahshua; however, the firstfruit is also Israel, since Israel is Yahweh’s Special Treasure – and always will be. This is a subject for another discussion, centering on the Book of Isaiah, of which the first 52 chapters are reputed to be about Israel, and the chapters beginning at 53 are about the Messiah. I suggest that Israel and the Messiah are synonymous in the entire Book of Isaiah, differentiating the physical from the spiritual, or in Hebrew “block-logic,” differentiating the P’shat from the Sod.

For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree [a euphemism for Israel and Yahshua (“I am the vine and you are the branches” – John 15:5)], do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the

root supports you, Romans 11:16-18 NKJV.

Commonwealth of Israel

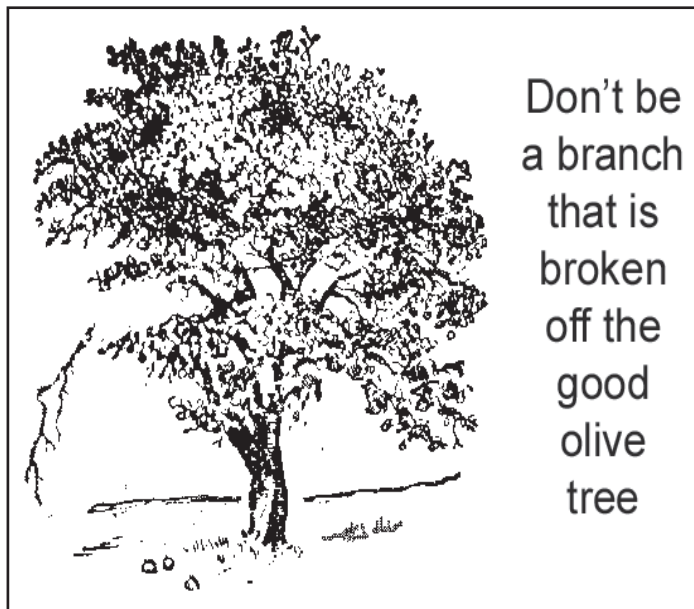
Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh – who are called *Uncircumcision* by what is called the *Circumcision* made in the flesh by hands – that at that time you were without Messiah [i.e., the Salvation of Yahweh], being aliens [being separated] from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from [again, a separation, from] the covenants of promise, having no hope and without Yahweh in the world. But now in Messiah Yahshua you who once were far off have been brought near [literally, arm-squeeze] by the blood of Messiah, Ephesians 2:11-13. You have been brought near. Brought near to WHAT? Paul is clearly saying that, by following in the way of Yahshua the Messiah [to obey the Father], one is brought near to the Commonwealth of Israel [being in the household of Yahweh]. Are the pieces of the puzzle beginning to fall into place?

Separation and Restoration

Let's take a look at the Exodus of the Israelites out of Egypt, because some are speaking about the "Greater Exodus," which I take to be the "Fullness of the Gentiles," when the "Multitude of Nations" are restored to the land promised by Yahweh to the whole house of Israel. Now, you might be wondering, "What in the world does the Fullness of the Gentiles have to do with the Exodus of the Israelites?" What do the so-called, "Jews," have to do with the so-called, "Gentiles?"

Well, as it turns out, everything! Everything you read in the Scripture has to do with separation and restoration. Yahweh made Adam. Then, He separated Adam's rib from him, made woman and then brought them together to become *echad*, united in one entity. He separated Adam and Eve from the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden and will one day bring them and their Seed, their righteous progeny, back to the Tree of Life in the Paradise of Yahweh.

Then Yahweh Elohim said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil and



now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever" – therefore Yahweh Elohim sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life, Genesis 3:22-24.

The word "know" comes from the Hebrew root word "yada," as in Genesis 4:1 – "Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived." Knowing good and evil means "actively practicing" good and evil.

Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city, Revelation 22:14.

Joseph was separated from the family of his father, Israel, when he was sold into slavery by his brothers – only to be reunited together, or restored, to build the great nation of Israel, in Egypt. After great tribulation, Israel was separated from Egypt, saved by the parting, or separation, of the Red Sea, allowing Israel to pass through; then, the walls of the Red Sea were brought back together [restored] to drown the army of Egypt.

Yahshua was separated from the living in an act of sacrifice for salvation offered to all who would worship the Father and obey His Commandments. He will return to unite with those who kept His charge to keep His commandments.

Yahweh separated the House of Israel and the House of Judah from the land promised to all Israel, due to their wickedness in taking up the religions of the nations. However, one day, He will bring them

back together. This is what Paul was referring to when he wrote, "... that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the Fullness of the Gentiles has come in," Romans 11:25. This is what Jacob called the "Multitude of Nations," the blessing placed upon Joseph's son, Ephraim. Now, let's go back to the Exodus.

The Exodus, that everyone is familiar with, involved a nation consisting of 12 Tribes, the patriarchs of which were the 12 sons of a man by the name of Jacob, later renamed Israel. We know the story of how one of Jacob's sons, Joseph,

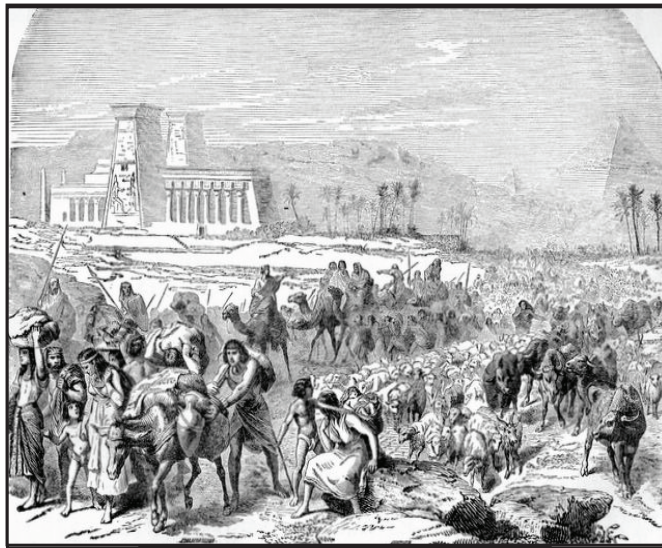
was sold into slavery by his brothers and how Jacob's entire family, numbering 70 souls, was re-united prophetically and then hidden away in the fertile land of Goshen, in the land of Egypt, where the family prospered and eventually grew into a massive nation over the years. The family became so substantial that the ruler of the land, the Pharaoh, became frightened, thinking that these people would overrun and destroy their nation, Egypt.

Egypt was a land of many deities. Israel, on the other hand, was a nation of one Almighty Sovereign, Yahweh Elohim. Pharaoh instituted slavery and genocide against the Israelites to stem their continued growth. And we know the story of how the infant Moses was set adrift in a basket on the Nile River and was taken in by the daughter of Pharaoh. Moses grew up as an Egyptian, but was cared for by his own Israelite mother, of the tribe of Levi. He grew in his understanding, began to acknowledge his Israelite heritage and, having killed an Egyptian who was beating one of his own people, fled the country. He went to the land of Midian and prospered there with a wife and children. But he was commanded by the Angel of Yahweh, in the burning bush, to return to Egypt to bring the nation of Israel, all 12 Tribes, including a mixed multitude, out of bondage and into a land flowing with milk and honey.

Today's Egyptian and Babylonian Captivity

Yahweh led Israel out of bondage in Egypt. What an amazing story! However, did you know that Egypt and Babylon have begun to reign again, today, over the lives of the righteous? These nations are

symbolic for a captivity of the mind and of the flesh – a captivity of the heart and of the soul – a captivity of false worship that Yahweh hates. It's called idolatry, the worship of idols, which is the seat of false worship. The fact is that we are in the land of Egypt, or, if you will, Babylon, right now. We are in a land where the predominant religions copy the religious worship of Nimrod, Tammuz, Mithra, Zeus and Ishtar. Those who hold no particular religious affiliation idolize actors, businessmen and athletes who hold seductive or "gifted" talents. They watch TV shows that vilify the spiritual values of the Word of Yahweh and promote transgression of the Law of



The Israelites leaving Egypt

Yahweh. They adhere to traditions held by paganism, a pantheon of mystery religions, reading Tarot cards, consulting their horoscopes, and honoring the day of their birth as something precious.

Those who worship Yahweh, calling upon His name and honoring His Holy Gatherings (Yahweh's Miqrai Qodesh) that He has declared to be Holy, are surrounded on all sides by, yes, many earnest and genuinely honest people, searching for truth, but being taught doctrines other than that of the Messiah they claim to follow. Yah-

weh will lead His people, Israel, out of this land of captivity again, but this time on a much greater scale. Will you be among those who will be rescued through the NEW COVENANT from this RENEWED CAPTIVITY?

Where do some of these doctrinal falsehoods come from? Here are several excerpts from an article I found on the website, "about.com," on Judaism. They read:

"The Jews departed Egypt in haste ... the Jewish nation rose together to leave the land of Egypt ... The story of Passover recounts the birth of the Jewish people as a nation whose ultimate goal is to be a 'light unto the nations.'"

This is an example of the distortion that exists when Scripture is interpreted according to man-made religions. There was no "Jewish Nation" at the time of the Exodus. Judah was, and still is, but one of the 12 tribes that grew to the status of a nation, the nation of Israel, while in Egypt. Yahweh led Israel, all 12 Tribes, out of captivity, out of the land of idolatry. An estimated 25% of those who left Egypt also included a "mixed multitude," made up of people of other nationalities who apparently wished to remain with the Israelites.

"Mixed multitude" literally means "an abundant web," as in the strands of thread that make up cloth. So, this was truly a mixture.

Restoration

Now, why is it important to understand that the Exodus included more than just one group of people? Simply put, we must be able to see how all of these people later became divided – and how one group became "lost"; AND, we must be able to see that the entirety of Scripture is about the RESTORA-

TION of the ENTIRE 12 Tribes of Israel. We have to remember that it is the WHOLE HOUSE OF ISRAEL that is the special treasure to Yahweh.

And Moses went up to Elohim, and Yahweh called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel," Exodus 19:3-6.

Sound familiar? Who will be, to Yahweh, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation? ISRAEL! Not the modern nation of Israel in the Middle East, comprised of one or two tribes, but the Israel of Yahweh, twelve Tribes.

To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His Elohim and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever, Revelation 1:5-6.

Here, Yahshua is speaking to John, reiterating the promises to the children of Israel, the Special Treasure of Yahweh.

Yahweh's Special Treasure – the Whole House of Israel

The hand of Yahweh came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of Yahweh, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones. Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and indeed they were very dry. And He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" So I answered, "O Sovereign Yahweh,

You know." Again He said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of Yahweh! [How does salvation begin? – by hearing the Word of Yahweh!] Thus says the Sovereign Yahweh to these bones: Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath [Ruach, Spirit] in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am Yahweh.'" So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone. Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them. Also He said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says the Sovereign Yahweh: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live." ' " So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army. Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, 'Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!' [literally – "Our hope is lost and we are decreed to ourselves"] Therefore prophecy and say to them, 'Thus says the Sovereign Yahweh: "Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am Yahweh, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, Yahweh, have spoken it and performed it," says Yahweh,' " Ezekiel 37:1-14.

So, how, or why, did this division take place – and how will Yahweh restore his Special Treasure, Israel? Here are several Scripture verses that demonstrate the reason for these separations.

Israel's Captivity (The 10 northern tribes)

In Jeremiah 16:11-15, Yahweh is speaking to the northern 10 tribes – The House of Israel – Ephraim – who began worshipping idols after Solomon's death, when Israel became two nations:

*"Your fathers have forsaken Me," says Yahweh; "they have walked after other idols and have served them and worshiped them, and have forsaken Me and not kept My law. And you have done worse than your fathers, for behold, each one follows the dictates of his own evil heart, so that no one listens to [obeys] Me. Therefore I will cast you out of this land into a land that you do not know, neither you nor your fathers; and there you shall serve other idols day and night, where I will not show you favor. Therefore behold, the days are coming," says Yahweh, "that it shall no more be said, 'Yahweh lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt [the Exodus] but, Yahweh lives who brought up the children of Israel [Now, hear this!] from the land of the north and from all the lands where He had driven them.' [This is what is being referred to as the GREATER Exodus]. For I will bring them back into their land which I gave to their fathers. ["Bring back" is the Hebrew word, *shuwb* – to return to a starting point; to restore, to rescue, and to REPENT].*

Judah's captivity (The 2 southern tribes)

Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hephzibah. And he did evil in the

sight of Yahweh, according to the abominations of the nations whom Yahweh had cast out before the children of Israel. For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; he raised up altars for Baal, and made a wooden image, as Ahab king of Israel had done; and he worshiped all the host of heaven and served them. He also built altars in the house of Yahweh, of which Yahweh had said, "In Jerusalem I will put My name." And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of Yahweh. Also he made his son pass through the fire, practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft, and consulted spiritists and mediums. He did much evil in the sight of Yahweh, to provoke Him to anger. He even set a carved image of Asherah that he had made, in the house of which Yahweh had said to David and to Solomon his son, "In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever; and I will not make the feet of Israel wander anymore from the land which I gave their fathers – only if they are careful to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that My servant Moses commanded them." But they paid no attention, and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than the nations whom Yahweh had destroyed before the children of Israel. And Yahweh spoke by His servants the prophets, saying, "Because Manasseh king of Judah has done these abominations (he has acted more wickedly than all the Amorites who were before him, and has also made Judah sin with his idols), therefore thus says Yahweh Elohi of Israel: 'Behold, I am bringing such calamity upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whoever hears of it, both his ears will tingle. And I will stretch over Jerusalem the measuring line of Samaria and

the plummet of the house of Ahab; I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down. So I will forsake the remnant of My inheritance and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become victims of plunder to all their enemies, because they have done evil in My sight, and have provoked Me to anger since the day their fathers came out of Egypt, even to this day,'" 2 Kings 21:1-15.

Is Israel lost forever? Has she been abandoned by Yahweh? Has He given favor to another group of people? Isaiah, speaking the words Yahweh has given him, puts an end to any doubt. He speaks of a day, yet in the future; a day we still wait for.



The Ark of the Covenant

"And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious." It shall come to pass in that day that Yahweh shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people who are left, from Assyria and Egypt, from Pathros and Cush, from Elam and Shinar, from Hamath and the islands of the sea. He will set up a banner for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. Also the envy of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not

envy Judah, and Judah shall not harass Ephraim, Isaiah 11:10-13.

Who is Yahweh speaking to? He is speaking to Ephraim and Judah. Even more clearly:

"In those days and in that time," says Yahweh, "The children of Israel shall come, they AND the children of Judah together; with continual weeping they shall come, and seek Yahweh their Elohim. They shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces toward it, saying, 'Come and let us join ourselves to Yahweh in a perpetual covenant that will not be forgotten.' My people have been lost sheep. Their shepherds have led them astray; they have turned them away on the mountains. They have gone from mountain to hill; they have forgotten their resting place," Jeremiah 50:4-6.

So, is it possible that the New Testament (literally, the Renewed Covenant) confirms the story summarized in Jeremiah 50, verses 4 through 6? Whom did James and Peter write to?

James, a bondservant of Yahweh and of the Master Yahshua the Messiah, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings,

James 1:1.

James was writing to the 12 Tribes scattered abroad. He was not writing to a "Jewish nation" that had been exiled by Rome, or to a Gentile nation, but to all the Tribes of Israel, including the ten tribes of the northern House of Israel and the two tribes of the House of Judah.

Peter [Kepa], an apostle of Yahshua Messiah, to the pilgrims [exiles] of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of Yahweh the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Yahshua Messiah: Grace to you and peace be multiplied, 1 Peter 1:1-2.

By using the phrase, "sprinkling of the blood of Yahshua Messiah," I believe Peter is referring to the atonement for the entire nation of Israel, as recorded in Leviticus 16:14-17:

He [the high priest] shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger on the mercy seat on the east side; and before the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times. Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering, which is for the people, bring its blood inside the veil, do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat. So he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, for all their sins; and so he shall do for the tabernacle of meeting which remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness.

Peter was writing to the "pilgrims of the Dispersion." What dispersion? Well, it HAD to be the dispersion of the 10 tribes of the House of Israel, the lost sheep that Yahshua spoke of; and NOT the dispersion of the House of Judah from Jerusalem in 70 C.E.! Certainly, Peter would have mentioned the destruction of the Temple in his writings if he were referring to the events of 70 C.E.

Whom did Yahshua the Messiah come for; and, to whom did He send His disciples?

These twelve Yahshua sent out and commanded them, saying: "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand,' " Matthew 10:5-7.

Then Yahshua went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that

region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Master, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed." But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us." But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Master, help me!" But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs." And she said, "Yes, Master, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." Then Yahshua answered and said to her, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour, Matthew 15:21-28.

This is a perfect picture of who "the lost sheep of the House of Israel" truly are – and has always been. Including the 12 Tribes of Israel, anyone who would believe, worship and obey the Elohim of Israel – becomes an Israelite.

One law shall be for the native-born and for the stranger who dwells among you, Exodus 12:49.

Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was the Messiah. But with most of them Yahweh was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play [to mock Yahweh]." Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as

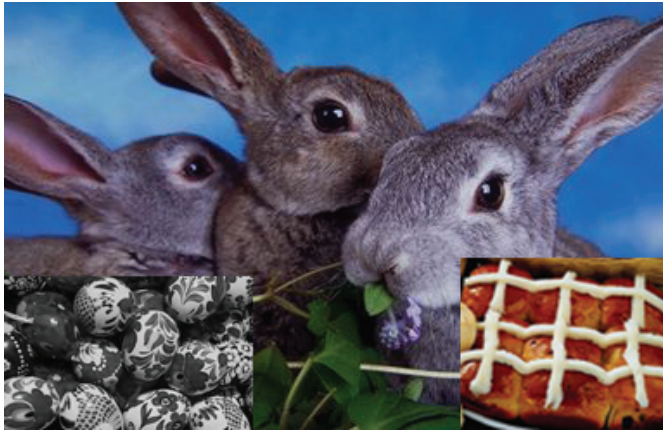
some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; nor let us tempt the Messiah, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come, 1 Corinthians 10:1-11.

What did Yahweh tell Moses about the ends of the ages?

Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where Yahweh your Elohim drives you, and you return to Yahweh your Elohim and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, that Yahweh your Elohim will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where Yahweh your Elohim has scattered you. If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven, from there Yahweh your Elohim will gather you, and from there He will bring you. Then Yahweh your Elohim will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. And Yahweh your Elohim will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live, Deuteronomy 30:1-6.

How great of an Exodus will this Multitude of Nations be, when the Fullness of the Gentiles comes up out of the ground to inhabit the land promised to Israel? May you be found in the Kingdom of Yahweh. HalleluYah!

Elder John Fisher



Easter

Rabbits, eggs and hot cross buns

To become more informed about the origins of “Easter” one needs only to “Google” the word “Easter” and go to many different web sites to learn about 1) the origin of Easter, 2) how the date of Easter was originally determined, 3) the traditions associated with Easter, and 4) Easter’s association with Passover. The information listed in this article can be found on more than one web site with Sacred Names used in place of the original pagan names.

Origin of the Name “Easter”

From an article by Larry Boemler, “Asterah and Easter,” *Biblical Archaeology Review*, Vol. 18, Number 3, 1992 – May/June the following appeared:

“The name ‘Easter’ originated with the names of an ancient Goddess and God. The Venerable Bede (672-735 CE.), a Christian scholar, first asserted in his book *De Ratione Temporum* that Easter was named after Eostre (a.k.a. Eastre). She was the Great Mother Goddess of the Saxon people in Northern Europe. Similarly, The ‘Teutonic dawn goddess of fertility [was] known variously as Ostare, Ostara, Ostern, Eostra, Eostre, Eostur, Eastra, Eastur, Astron and Ausos.’ Her name was derived from the ancient word for spring: ‘eastre.’ Similar Goddesses were known by other names in ancient cultures around the Mediterranean, and were celebrated in the springtime. Some were:

1. Aphrodite from ancient Cyprus,
2. Ashtoreth from ancient Israel,
3. Astarte from ancient Greece,
4. Demeter from Mycenae,
5. Hathor from ancient Egypt,
6. Ishtar from Assyria,
7. Kali from India, and
8. Ostara, a Norse Goddess of fertility.”

“An alternate explanation has been suggested. The name given by the Frankish church to [Yahshua’s] resurrection festival included the Latin word ‘alba’ which means ‘white.’ (This was a reference to the white robes that were worn during the festival.)

“Easter is an English word derived from the name

of a Germanic Goddess, and you won’t get any argument from me if you think the word should be deprecated because of its association with pagan fertility rites. On the other hand, the Old Testament book of Esther is named after a Jewish heroine who bore the name of the goddess Ishtar! In the ancient Church, the celebration of the Resurrection was called Passover. Today, Orthodox Christians call this holiday the Pasch (as in paschal lamb), which is the Greek word for Passover.” (Copyright ©2003 by the Rev. Kenneth W. Collins.)

Origin of the Date of Easter

“From 31 A.D. to 325 A.D. Easter Day was celebrated either:

(a) on or just after the first day of the Jewish Passover (no matter on which day of the week that Easter Day occurred), or

(b) on a Sunday close to or on the first Passover Day.

Both of these methods existed continuously throughout this period.” (Copyright © 1996-2002 Astronomical Society of South Australia, Inc. All rights reserved.)

“Prior to A.D. 325, Easter was variously celebrated on different days of the week, including Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. In that year, the Council of Nicaea was convened by Emperor Constantine. It issued the Easter Rule which states that Easter shall be celebrated on the first Sunday that occurs after the first full moon on or after the vernal equinox. However, a caveat must be introduced here. The ‘full moon’ in the rule is the ecclesiastical full moon, which is defined as the fourteenth day of a tabular lunation, where day 1 corresponds to the ecclesiastical New Moon. It does not always occur on the same date as the astronomical full moon. The ecclesiastical ‘vernal equinox’ is always on March 21. Therefore, Easter must be celebrated on a Sunday between the dates of March 22 and April 25.” (Copyright © 2003 by Jerry Wilson. Used with permission.)

"Easter Sunday, from 326 A.D., is always one of the 35 days March 22 to April 25. From 326 A.D. to 1582 A.D. Easter Sunday date was based on the Julian calendar in use at that time. It became defined as the Sunday following the Paschal Full Moon date for the year, using a simple '19 PFM dates' table. PFM stands for the Paschal Full Moon.

"The Julian calendar was replaced by the Gregorian calendar in October 1582 to re-align March 20 (and therefore Easter) with the seasons by removing 10 days October 5 to 14, 1582. This replacement did not occur until later in many countries, e.g., in September 1752 in England. The Gregorian calendar very closely maintains the alignment of seasons and calendar dates by having leap years in only 1 of every 4 century years, namely, those divisible exactly by 400. One additional February 29 date will need to be removed in about 4140 A.D., therefore Easter calculations will need to use the changed Days of Week of PFM dates when the exact year for this removal is decided.

"From 326 A.D., the Easter Sunday Date for any given year is NOT determined by the March Equinox date for that year. March 20 (not March 21) is the most common Gregorian Equinox date from 1583 to 4099 A.D.

"Historically, references to March 21 have caused mistakes in calculating Easter Sunday dates. March 20 has become the important date in recent Easter dating methods. Despite frequent references to March 21, this date has no special significance to any recent Easter dating methods." (Copyright © 1996-2002 Astronomical Society of South Australia, Inc. All rights reserved.)

The timing of the Christian celebration of Easter is linked to the Jewish celebration of the Passover. Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were observed by the

ancient Israelites early in each new year. (The Jewish people followed the Persian/Babylonian calendar and started each year with the Spring Equinox circa MAR-21.)

"Equinox" means 'equal night;' on that date of the year, the night and day are approximately equal. The name 'Passover' was derived from the actions of the angel of death as described in the book of Exodus. The angel 'passed over' the homes of the Israelites which were marked with the blood obtained from a ritual animal sacrifice. The same angel exterminated the first born(s) of every family whose doorway was not so marked. Victimized were first-born sons as well as the first-born of domesticated animals.

Pagan Origins of Easter

Since its conception as a holy celebration in the second century, Easter has had its non-religious side. In fact, Easter was originally a pagan festival.

"The ancient Saxons celebrated the return of spring with an uproarious festival commemorating their goddess of offspring and of springtime, Eastre. When the second-century Christian missionaries encountered the tribes of the north with their pagan celebrations, they attempted to convert them to Christianity. They did so, however, in a clandestine manner.

"As it happened, the pagan festival of Eastre occurred at the same time of year as the Christian observance of the Resurrection of [Messiah]. It made sense, therefore, to alter the festival itself, to make it a Christian celebration as converts were slowly won over. The early name, Eastre, was eventually changed to its modern spelling, Easter." (Copyright © 2003 by Jerry Wilson. Used with permission.)

"Many, perhaps most, pagan religions in the Mediterranean area had a major seasonal day of religious celebration at or following the

Spring Equinox. Cybele, the Phrygian fertility goddess, had a fictional consort who was believed to have been born via a virgin birth. He was Attis, who was believed to have died and been resurrected each year during the period MAR-22 to MAR-25. 'About 200 B.C. mystery cults began to appear in Rome just as they had earlier in Greece. Most notable was the Cybele cult centered on Vatican hill ...Associated with the Cybele cult was that of her lover, Attis (the older Tammuz, Osiris, Dionysus, or Orpheus under a new name). He was a god of ever-reviving vegetation. Born of a virgin, he died and was reborn annually. The festival began as a day of blood on Black Friday and culminated after three days in a day of rejoicing over the resurrection.'

"Wherever Christian worship of [Yahshua] and pagan worship of Attis were active in the same geographical area in ancient times, Christians 'used to celebrate the death and resurrection of [Yahshua] on the same date; and pagans and Christians used to quarrel bitterly about which of their idols was the true prototype and which the imitation.' Since the worship of Cybele was brought to Rome in 204 BCE, about 250 years before Christianity, it is obvious that if any copying occurred, it was the Christians that copied the traditions of the pagans.

"Many religious historians believe that the death and resurrection legends were first associated with Attis, many centuries before the birth of [Yahshua]. They were simply grafted onto stories of [Yahshua's] life in order to make Christian theology more acceptable to pagans. Others suggest that many of the events in [Yahshua's] life that were recorded in the gospels were lifted from the life of Krishna, the second person of the Hindu Trinity. Ancient Christians had an alternate explanation; they claimed that Satan had created counterfeit deities in

advance of the coming of the Messiah in order to confuse humanity. Modern-day Christians generally regard the Attis legend as being a pagan myth of little value. They regard [Yahshua's] death and resurrection account as being true, and unrelated to the earlier tradition." (Copyright 1999 to 2003 incl., by Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance.)

Easter and Pagan Celebrations

"The first thing we must understand is that professing Christians were not the only ones who celebrated a festival called 'Easter.' 'Ishtar,' which is pronounced 'Easter,' was a day that commemorated the resurrection of one of their gods that they called 'Tammuz,' who was believed to be the only begotten son of the moon-goddess and the sun-god.

"In those ancient times, there was a man named Nimrod, who was the grandson of one of Noah's sons named Ham. Ham had a son named Cush who married a woman named Semiramis. Cush and Semiramis then had a son named 'Nimrod.' After the death of his father, Nimrod married his own mother and became a powerful king.

"The Bible tells of this man, Nimrod, in Genesis 10:8-10, as follows: 'And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before [Yahweh]: wherefore it is said, even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before [Yahweh]. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.'

"Nimrod became a god-man to the people and Semiramis, his wife and mother, became the powerful Queen of ancient Babylon. Nimrod was eventually killed by an enemy, and his body was cut in pieces and sent to various parts of his kingdom. Semiramis had all of the parts gathered, except for one part that

could not be found. That missing part was his reproductive organ. Semiramis claimed that Nimrod could not come back to life without it and told the people of Babylon that Nimrod had ascended to the sun and was now to be called 'Baal,' the sun god.

"Queen Semiramis also proclaimed that Baal would be present on earth in the form of a flame, whether candle or lamp, when used in worship. Semiramis was creating a mystery religion, and with the help of Satan, she set herself up as a goddess. Semiramis claimed that she was immaculately conceived. She taught that the moon was a goddess that went through a 28 day cycle and ovulated when full. She further claimed that she came down from the moon in a giant moon egg that fell into the Euphrates River.

"This was to have happened at the time of the first full moon after the spring equinox. Semiramis became known as 'Ishtar,' which is pronounced 'Easter,' and her moon egg became known as 'Ishtar's egg.' Ishtar soon became pregnant and claimed that it was the rays of the sun-god Baal that caused her to conceive. The son that she brought forth was named Tammuz.

"Tammuz was noted to be especially fond of rabbits, and they became sacred in the ancient religion, because Tammuz was believed to be the son of the sun-god, Baal. Tammuz, like his supposed father, became a hunter.

"Ishtar, who was now worshipped as the 'Mother of God and Queen of Heaven,' continued to build her mystery religion. They ate sacred cakes with the marking of a 'T' or cross on the top.

"Every year, on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox, a celebration was made. It was Ishtar's Sunday and was celebrated with rabbits and eggs.

"The truth is that Easter has

nothing whatsoever to do with the resurrection of [Yahshua Messiah]. The truth is that the forty days of Lent, eggs, rabbits, hot cross buns and the Easter ham have everything to do with the ancient pagan religion of Mystery Babylon. These are all antiMessiah activities!

"These customs of Easter honor Baal, who is also Satan, and is still worshipped as the 'Rising Sun' and his house is the 'House of the Rising Sun.' How many churches have 'sunrise services' on Ishtar's day and face the rising sun in the East? How many will use colored eggs and rabbit stories, as they did in ancient Babylon?" (Written in Last Trumpet Ministries International.)

Ancient and Modern Spring Celebrations *Ancient Britain*

Both the solstices and equinoxes "were the highly sophisticated preoccupation of the mysterious Megalithic peoples who pre-dated Celt, Roman and Saxon on Europe's Atlantic fringe by thousands of years." The equinoxes were not otherwise celebrated in ancient Britain until recent years.

Ancient Ireland

The spring and fall equinox were celebrated in ancient times. A cluster of megalithic cairns are scattered through the hills at Loughcrew, about 55 miles northwest of Dublin in Ireland. Loughcrew Cairn T is a passage tomb which is designated so that the light from the rising sun on the spring and summer equinoxes penetrates a long corridor and illuminates a backstone, which is decorated with astronomical symbols. ("Equinox – Loughcrew Cairn T," 2002-MAR-23 at: <http://www.knowth.com/>.)

Ancient Germans

Ostara, the Germanic fertility Goddess, was associated with human and crop fertility. On the spring

equinox, she mated with the solar god and conceived a child that would be born 9 months later on Dec-21: Yule, the winter solstice.

Ancient Mayans

The indigenous Mayan people in Central America have celebrated a spring equinox festival for ten centuries. As the sun sets on the day of the equinox on the great ceremonial pyramid, El Castillo, Mexico, its "western face...is bathed in the late afternoon sunlight. The lengthening shadows appear to run from the top of the pyramid's northern staircase to the bottom, giving the illusion of a diamond-backed snake in descent." This has been called "The return of the Sun Serpent" since ancient times. ("Mayan spring equinox sacred sites tour and cruise: The return of the Sun Serpent," at: [http://www.solunatours.com/.](http://www.solunatours.com/))

Ancient Greeks

The god-man Dionysos was a major deity among the ancient Greeks. "As a god of the spring rites, of the flowering plants and fruitful vines, Dionysos was said to be in terrible pain during winter, when most living things sicken and die, or hibernate." Persephone, a daughter of Demeter, descended into the Otherworld and returned near the time of the spring equinox. This story has close parallels to various Goddess legends, stories of the life of King Arthur, and of [Yahshua Messiah].

Ancient Persia

ZOROASTRIANISM: Various ancient civilizations (Mesopotamia, Sumeria, Babylonia, Elam) circa 3000 to 2000 BCE celebrated new years at the time of the spring equinox. "No Rus," the new day or New Year, has been celebrated in the area of modern-day Iran since the Achaemenian (Hakhamaneshi) period over 2,500 years ago. It survived because of Zoroastrianism which was the religion of Ancient

Persia before the advent of Islam 1,400 years ago. Many religious historians trace the Judeo-Christian concepts of Hell, Heaven, Resurrection, the arrival of the Messiah, and the last judgment to Zoroastrianism. In that faith, the "Lord of Wisdom created all that was good and became God. The Hostile Spirit, Angra Mainyu (Ahriman), residing in the eternal darkness created all that was bad and became the Hostile Spirit." ["Lady Day: March 19-20 (The Vernal Equinox)," at: [http://ladyhedgehog.hedgeie.com/.](http://ladyhedgehog.hedgeie.com/)] This dualistic God/Satan concept is surprisingly close to the views of conservative Christianity today.

Ancient Romans

In "about 200 B.C., mystery cults began to appear in Rome just as they had earlier in Greece. Most notable was the Cybele cult centered on Vatican hill...Associated with the Cybele cult was that of her lover, Attis (the older Tammuz, Osiris, Dionysus, or Orpheus under a new name)...The festival began as a day of blood on Black Friday and culminated after three days in a day of rejoicing over the resurrection." Attis was born of a human woman, a virgin named Nana. He "grew up to become a sacrificial victim and savior, slain to bring salvation to mankind. His body was eaten by his worshipers in the form of bread...[He was] crucified on a pine tree, whence his holy blood poured down to redeem the earth." [B. G. Walker, "The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets," Harper & Row, San Francisco CA (1983), pages 77 to 79.] The celebration was held on Mar 25, 9 months before his birth on Dec. 25. In Rome, the rituals took place where St. Peter's now stands in Vatican City. [Janet & Stewart Farrar, "Eight Sabbats for Witches," Phoenix Publishing, (1981), page 14; pages 72 to 79.] The similarities between the stories of Attis and [Yahshua] are obvious.

Ancient Saxons

Eostre was the Saxon version of the Germanic lunar goddess Ostara. She gave her name to the Christian Easter and to the female hormone estrogen. Her feast day was held on the full moon following the vernal equinox – almost the identical calculation as for the Christian Easter in the west. One delightful legend associated with Eostre was that she found an injured bird on the ground one winter. To save its life, she transformed it into a hare. But "the transformation was not a complete one. The bird took the appearance of a hare but retained the ability to lay eggs. ...the hare would decorate these eggs and leave them as gifts to Eostre." ["Lady Day: March 19-20 (The Vernal Equinox), at: [http://ladyhedgehog.hedgeie.com/.](http://ladyhedgehog.hedgeie.com/)]

Baha'i Faith

Naw-Ruz is an ancient Iranian New Year's Day festival which occurs near the Spring Equinox. It is now a world holiday of the Baha'i faith. If the equinox occurs before sunset, then New Year's Day is celebrated on that day in the Middle East; otherwise it is delayed until the following day. In the rest of the world, it is always on Mar-21. It is celebrated with many symbols indicating regrowth and renewal – much like the Christian Easter.

Christianity

The record of the Roman Army's execution date of [Yahshua] of Nazareth (later known as Jesus Christ) has been lost. Dates linked to the Jewish Passover celebration in the years 29 to 33 CE have been suggested. Easter commemorates [Yahshua's] execution, visit to Hell, and resurrection. Easter Sunday is a moveable holy day, being celebrated from late March to late April. It is named after the Teutonic goddess Eostre, whose name is probably yet another variant of Istar, Astarte and Aset..." [(Janet and Stewart Farrar, "Eight Sabbats

for Witches,” Phoenix Publishing, (1981), page 14; pages 72 to 79.)]

Judaism

“In its origin, the Passover dinner itself was a spring fertility festival – the unleavened bread coming from the agricultural past of the people and the paschal lamb from its more distant pastoral years.” (A. M. Greely, “The greatest mysteries; an essential catechism,” at: <http://www.usao.edu/>.)

Started Before Christianity

Since the worship of the before mentioned Cybele, the Phrygian fertility goddess, was brought to Rome in 204 BCE, about 250 years before Christianity, it is obvious that if any copying occurred, it was the Christians that copied the traditions of the pagans.

Among the Roman Catholic church and Protestant denominations, Easter Sunday falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after March 20, the nominal date of the Spring Equinox. Its ancient linkages to sun and moon worship are obvious. Many sources incorrectly state that the starting date of the calculation is the actual day of the Equinox rather than the nominal date of March 20. Other sources use an incorrect reference date of March 21.

Easter Sunday can fall on any date from March 22 to April 25.

The year-to-year sequence is so complicated that it takes 5.7 million years to repeat. Eastern Orthodox churches sometimes celebrate Easter on the same day as the Roman Catholics and Protestants. However, if that date does not follow Passover, then the Orthodox churches delay their Easter – sometimes by over a month.

Easter and Pagan Traditions

“The Easter Bunny is not a

modern invention. The symbol originated with the pagan festival of Eastre. The goddess, Eastre, was worshipped by the Anglo-Saxons through her earthly symbol, the rabbit. The Germans brought the symbol of the Easter rabbit to America. It was widely ignored by other Christians until shortly after the Civil War. In fact, Easter itself was not widely celebrated in America until after that time.

“As with the Easter Bunny and the holiday itself, the Easter Egg predates the Christian holiday of Easter. The exchange of eggs in the springtime is a custom that was centuries old when Easter was first celebrated by Christians. From the earliest times, the egg was a symbol of rebirth in most cultures. Eggs were often wrapped in gold leaf or, if you were a peasant, colored brightly by boiling them with the leaves or petals of certain flowers. Today, children hunt colored eggs and place them in Easter baskets along with the modern version of real Easter eggs – those made of plastic or chocolate candy.” (Copyright © 2003 by Jerry Wilson. Used with permission.)

“Easter Rabbit and Eggs: The symbols of the Norse Goddess Ostara were the hare and the egg. Both represented fertility. From these, we have inherited the customs and symbols of the Easter egg and Easter rabbit. Dyed eggs also formed part of the rituals of the Babylonian mystery religions. Eggs ‘were sacred to many ancient civilizations and formed an integral part of religious ceremonies in Egypt and the Orient. Dyed eggs were hung in Egyptian temples, and the egg was regarded as the emblem of regenerative life proceeding from the mouth of the great Egyptian god.’”

“Easter Lilies: ‘The so-called “Easter lily” has long been revered by pagans of various lands as a holy symbol associated with the reproductive organs. It was considered a phallic symbol!’”

“Easter Sunrise Service: This custom can be traced back to the ancient Pagan custom of welcoming the sun god at the vernal equinox - when daytime is about to exceed the length of the nighttime. It was a time to ‘celebrate the return of life and reproduction to animal and plant life as well.’ Worship of the sun god at sunrise may be the religious ritual condemned by [Yahweh] as recorded in Ezekiel 8:16-18:

“...behold, at the door of the temple of [Yahweh], between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of [Yahweh], and their faces toward the east; and they were worshipping the sun toward the east. Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen (this), O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? For they have filled the land with violence, and have turned again to provoke me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose. Therefore will I also deal in wrath; mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity; and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them.’ (ASV)

“Easter Candles: These are sometimes lit in churches on the eve of Easter Sunday. Some commentators believe that these can be directly linked to the pagan customs of lighting bonfires at this time of year to welcome the rebirth/resurrection of the sun God.” (Copyright 1999 to 2003 incl., by Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance.)

“Easter’s connection with spring and nature: Diana (the Ephesian goddess of sex, fertility, virginity and motherhood) was said to be the source of nature. Eostre (an Anglo-Saxon/Teutonic goddess) was the goddess of the sunrise and spring. Ostara (a Norse/Saxon goddess) was the maiden goddess of spring.

“Origins of Hares (Bunnies) and

Eggs: According to Teutonic myth, the hare was once a bird whom Eostre changed into a four-footed creature. Thus, it can also lay eggs. The hare is also the sacred companion and sacrificial victim of Eostre. Astarte (a Phoenician/Syrian goddess), on the other hand, was believed to have been hatched from a huge egg which fell into the Euphrates.

“Origins of Good Friday: Did you ever wonder why Good Friday is recognized as the day [Yahshua] died and Sunday as the day He arose, but yet had trouble explaining how he could thus be buried for three days and three nights? (Matthew 12:40; Matthew 27:63; Mark 8:31; Mark 9:31; Mark 10:34). The answer is simple: He didn't actually die on 'Good Friday.' The Chaldeans offered cakes to Ishtar on the equivalent of the day we know as Good Friday. When the established church wanted to appease the paganistic people in order to 'convert' them to Christianity, they moved the dates accordingly.

“Origins of Hot Cross Buns and Fires: Cakes bearing a cross-like symbol representing the pair of cow-horns on the moon goddess, Isis, were offered by ancient Egyptians. The cakes which Greeks offered to Astarte and other divinities were called bous or boun, from which the word 'bun' is derived. The Babylonians/Chaldeans offered similar cakes to the 'Queen of Heaven.' Fires were lit on top of mountains and had to be kindled from new fire, drawn from wood by friction. The fire was then used to bake cakes in sacrifice to Semiramis, the 'Queen of Heaven.' This practice, along with burning incense, was used in conjunction with baking the cakes and is mentioned specifically in the Bible (1 Kings 11:8; 2 Kings 17:7-16; 2 Kings 18:4; 2 Kings 23:4-15; Isaiah 17:8; Isaiah 27:9; Ezekiel 8:7-12; Jeremiah 7:16-19; Jeremiah 44:19, 25). In addition to the cross

imprinted on these cakes representing the horns of the goddess, it also sometimes represented the four seasons or four phases of the moon. Cakes were also offered to or eaten in honor of Apollo, Diana, Hecate, and the moon (also Diana's symbol).

“Origins of Lent: The word 'lent' is of Anglo-Saxon origin meaning 'spring.' Lent developed from the pagan celebration of weeping, fasting, and mourning for 40 days over the death of Tammuz (one day for each year of his life). Tammuz (the son/husband of the Babylonian idol Ishtar) was killed by a wild boar and then allegedly resurrected. This mourning of Tammuz is specifically prophesied by Ezekiel in the Bible and is characterized by [Yahweh] Himself as being detestable (Ezekiel 8:13-15).

“Origins of the use of the lily: Asherah (a Sidonian goddess) was frequently represented as a nude woman bestride a lion with a lily (symbolizing grace and sex appeal) in one hand and a serpent (symbolizing fecundity) in the other.

“Origins of wearing new clothing for Easter: The tradition of wearing new clothing for Easter comes from the superstition that a new garment worn at Easter means good luck throughout the year.” (Copyright © 1998-2001 Timothy A. & Kimberly B. Southall.)

“Wicca and other neo-pagan traditions: This is a group of religions which are attempted re-creations of ancient pagan religions. Of these, Wicca is the most common; it is loosely based on ancient Celtic beliefs, symbols and practices, with the addition of some more recent Masonic and ceremonial magic rituals.

“Mono-theistic religions, like Judaism, Christianity and Islam, tend to view time as linear. It started with creation; the world as we know it will end at some time in the future. Aboriginal and Neo-pagan religions see time as circular and

repetitive, with lunar (monthly) and solar (yearly) cycles. Their '...rituals guarantee the continuity of nature's cycles, which traditional human societies depend on for their sustenance.'

“Wiccans recognize eight seasonal days of celebration. Four are minor sabbats and occur at the two solstices and the two equinoxes. The other are major sabbats which happen approximately halfway between an equinox and solstice. Wiccans may celebrate Lady Day on the evening before, or at sunrise on the morning of the equinox, or at the exact time of vernal equinox.

“Near the Mediterranean, this is a time of sprouting of the summer's crop; farther north, it is the time for seeding. Their rituals at the Spring Equinox are related primarily to the fertility of the crops and to the balance of the day and night times. Where Wiccans can safely celebrate the sabbat out of doors without threat of religious persecution, they often incorporate a bonfire into their rituals, jumping over the dying embers to assure fertility of people and crops. It is experienced as a time of balance, of equilibrium.”

As we can easily see, traditions associated with the festival survive in the Easter rabbit, a symbol of fertility, and in colored Easter eggs, originally painted with bright colors to represent the sunlight of spring and used in Easter-egg rolling contests or given as gifts.

The Christian celebration of Easter embodies a number of traditions with emphasis on the relation of Easter to the Jewish festival of Passover, or Pesach, from which is derived Pasch, another name used by Europeans for Easter. After Passover is an important feast in the Jewish calendar, which is celebrated for 7 days and commemorates the flight and freedom of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.

Easter is observed by the churches of the West on the first Sunday following the full moon that

occurs on or following the spring equinox (March 21). So Easter became a "movable" feast, which can occur as early as March 22 or as late as April 25.

Christian churches in the East, which were closer to the birthplace of the new religion and in which old traditions were strong, observe Easter according to the date of the Passover festival.

Easter is at the end of the Lenten season, which covers a forty-six-day period that begins on Ash Wednesday and ends with Easter. The Lenten season itself comprises forty days, as the six Sundays in Lent are not actually a part of Lent. Sundays are considered a commemoration of Easter Sunday and have always been excluded from the Lenten fast. The Lenten season is a period of penitence in preparation for the highest festival of the church year, Easter Holy Week, the last week of Lent, which begins with the observance of Palm Sunday. Palm Sunday takes its name from Yahshua's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, where the crowds laid the branches from palm trees at His feet. Holy Thursday commemorates the Last Supper, which was held the evening before the Crucifixion. Friday, in the Holy Week, is the anniversary of the Crucifixion, the day that the Messiah was crucified and died on the [stake].

Christian tradition indicated that the Holy week and the Lenten season ends with Easter Sunday, the day celebrated as the resurrection of Messiah Yahshua.

One big question needs to be answered: "Does the Bible instruct us to observe Ash Wednesday, the forty-six days of Lent, Holy Week, Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday?" Are these days spoken of in the Bible as days of religious worship by Yahweh's people? Or, are these days and events borrowed from springtime pagan events that Yahweh actu-

ally condemns in the Bible? The answers should be obvious once you have read this far.

What Say You?

Now that you have read many ideas concerning the false and pagan background of celebrating Easter, are you willing to believe the Scriptures to follow the truths given to us in those Scriptures? Study the Scriptures, because what is contained in the Scriptures will set you free.

Elder Roger G. Meyer

<Passover from page 9>

From the *Living Bible Encyclopedia in Story and Pictures*, by H. S. Stuttman Co. (Vol. 16, pp. 2088-2089), we read the following interesting comment, "Means for preserving grape juice were well known: Kato, De Agri Cultura CXX has this recipe: 'If you wish to have must (grape juice) all year, put grape juice in an amphora and seal the cork with pitch; sink it in a fish pond. After 30 days take it out. It will be grape juice for a whole year.'"

At the Last Supper, Yahshua spoke of "the fruit of the vine" (Matt. 26:29), as in the Passover liturgy; it may be studied avoidance over the term wine, showing the drink unfermented, as the bread was unleavened. In ancient Israel, the tithe of wine, as well as the other crops, was expected. Notice Deuteronomy 12:17, *You may not eat within your gates the tithe of your corn, or of your wine...* The word wine here is actually *ty-rosh*, Strong's Concordance No. 8492. It means fresh grape juice, that which is pressed out first. This can be found in Deuteronomy 7:13 and also 14:23, 26, and 18:4, 28:51.

Firstfruit Juice More Pure

When harvested, the grapes

were first thrown into a wine vat. The sheer weight of grapes caused some juice to begin flowing. This special juice was collected first. It had fewer yeast spores mixed in because it had not been trampled by feet. (Customarily, after the vat was filled with grapes, one would get in with his bare feet and tread the winepress to squeeze out all the juice from the grapes.) Because of the agitation, much of the yeast from the outside of the skin would be mixed in with the grape juice as it came out of the vat.

The tithe or firstfruits of the winepress would be the fresh juice that came of its own weight after the grapes were piled into the winepress. Therefore, when preserved especially for the Passover usage, it was quite easy to maintain this juice pure and unfermented for a year, plenty of time to remain pure until the Passover season.

Many grape juice processors have confirmed that the juice itself could be kept in ancient Israel even with their primitive methods from one season to another. One company offered the observation that pollution then was nowhere near what it is now. Therefore, grapes themselves would have fewer yeast spores on the skins.

There are some who contend that wine has to be the symbol of the Messiah's blood. However, this gets us into other problems.

The wine would have sugars within the grape juice itself broken down and turned into alcohol and a decomposition sets in. Fermenting is actually a rotting process. It is a decay of a complex molecule. This is true whether of bread or of grape juice.

Yahshua's sinless blood can be represented only by unfermented, pure grape juice.

Elder Donald R. Mansager



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He shall cause them that come of Jacob to
take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and
fill the face of the world with fruit, Isa. 27:6

KJV

