

ISRAEL PRAYER UPDATE

Glory of Zion International Ministries



1. AT THE PASSOVER TABLE: A BLEMISHED PIG LONGSIDE THE SPOTLESS LAMB.

“On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household...Your lamb shall be without blemish...now you shall guard it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight. And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it...And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.” (Exodus 12:3, 5, 6-7, 13b; Emphases ours).

“And I will come near you for judgment; I will be a swift witness against sorcerers...” (Malachi 3:4-5; See *Haftarah* below)

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, shortened **Hogwarts**, is a fictional British school of magic for students aged eleven to eighteen, and is the primary setting for the first six books in J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series. (Wikipedia)

On Monday evening of next week (April 10th) Jews round the world will gather around their Seder tables to celebrate the delivery of their ancient ancestors from bondage in Egypt. They will be remembering the blood of the sacrificed lamb on their doorposts, the blood which caused them to be “passed-over” when the LORD went in judgment through the land. A central part of our celebrating this feast of Passover is recounting together the record of what happened on that wonderful evening, “*And you shall tell your son in that day, saying, ‘This is done because of what YHVH did for me when I came up from Egypt’*” (Exodus 13:8). We are assisted in doing this by a *haggadah* (Hebrew: “The Telling”), a book from which all those sitting round the table will read during the course of the *Seder*. Although a particular Hebrew form of Haggadah has become more or less standard in Israel, there is no Biblical rule about it and there are many variants. The important thing is that it relates the story of deliverance in a language all can understand; that it have places to pause for such directives as eating the bitter herbs; and that it end in thanksgiving and praise—usually several pages of Psalms to be recited or sung together! Hak

This past weekend we found our attention drawn to a large advertisement on the second page of The Jerusalem Post, “Harry Potter and the Order of the Seder...Available now at Judaica bookstores near you.” Within the advertisement was a picture of a book entitled, ***The (unofficial) Hogwarts Haggadah***. This new “Haggadah” is the brainchild of a Jewish rabbi in Queens, New York named Moshe Rosenberg. Although self-published, it exploded in mass-market this past week, racing already to best-seller status. By yesterday it had become the #1 bestselling Haggadah on Amazon.com; according to some reports it is now nearing the top of their general book list. Since this first edition is aimed primarily at English speakers, and there is only a week to go before Passover, it is unlikely to have major sales in Israel...at least not this year.

In a recent interview, Rabbi Rosenberg sought to explain his rationale for producing the *haggadah*:

There are so many parallels between Harry Potter’s journey from unwanted orphan to the savior of wizard-kind...The entire Harry Potter series, and each book, contains many of the key elements and lessons of the Exodus story—uplifting the downtrodden, sharing our current wealth and prosperity with others, education, different learning styles, parent-child relationships, unconditional love and kinship with one another and so on. It’s always been a gift to have a common language with which to communicate with anyone that you’re teaching, and Harry Potter has been exactly that. **1)**

Rosenberg goes on to assure readers that the new Haggadah “*contains the full Hebrew text of a traditional Ashkenazi haggadah, an English translation, and sections throughout of Harry Potter-themed commentary and divrei-Torah* [passages from the Torah]. **2)** An entry on Facebook a few days later by “Nice Jewish Fangirls” announced an interview in which, “We speak with Rabbi Moshe Rosenberg, author of the hot-off-the-presses *The Unofficial Hogwarts Haggadah*, *diving into the links between the magical world and the Jewish holiday of redemption*” (Emphases ours.).

So why should we find the appearance of this “Hogwarts Haggadah” seriously disturbing, enough to bring before your attention today?

*** It seeks to provide a harmonization between God’s way of redemption from slavery and Satan’s way—*sorcery*.** It is remarkable that the very *second sentence* in this week’s reading from the Prophets places this at the top of the list of offences God will draw near Israel to judge: ***“I will be a swift witness against sorcerers...”*** (Malachi 3:5; see *Haftarah* below) Our God’s hatred for all forms of sorcery, magic, witchcraft (Numbers 23:23; Isaiah 47:12; Revelation 9:21) is linked with its root is *rebellion* against His Life: ***“The sin of magic* (Hebrew: *kesem*; I Samuel 15:23) *is rebellion.*”** That was the first temptation against Adam and Eve in the Garden—to rebel against God’s good word and seek another way of “enlightenment.” (The word for “sorcery” in Numbers 23:23 is *nakhash*—same as the word for “serpent” in Genesis 3). A craving after this hidden knowledge through *sorcery* is listed as one of the “works of the flesh” in Galatians 5:20.

*** It is an attempt to harmonize God’s way for His people with a way He has soberly warned them to avoid.** (A headline in the March 29th *The Algemeiner* reads: “Newly released ‘Harry Potter’ Haggadah Parallels Biblical Exodus with Hogwarts Journeys, Messages.”) In the Torah Portion two weeks ago we saw how Aaron was seduced into forming gold into a calf, an idol which the people could worship—while at the same time calling them to “observe a feast to YHVH” (Exodus 32:5).

*** This unholy “harmony” is aimed at Jewish young people.** The fictional “Hogwarts” (see Wikipedia entry above) was a school of witchcraft and wizardry “for students aged eleven to eighteen. It is these (and younger) which are expected to be the market for the new book.

*** We see the presence of this “Haggadah” on any Seder table this holy night as being a blasphemous satanic mockery of the “Lamb” whose blood was the salvation for God’s people Israel (and all the children of Adam).**

On the 10th day of the month a lamb (which would be slaughtered on the night of the 14th) set aside—a lamb ***“without blemish.”*** (Exodus 12:5). This new “haggadah” places on the table with the Passover Lamb, that which Judaism sees as the most *un*-clean animal (hog/pig) covered with blemishes (warts).

PLEASE PRAY:

*** That this Passover season, there would be *“no sorcery against Jacob, nor any divination against Israel...that it will be said of Jacob and of Israel, ‘Oh what God has done!’”***(Numbers 23:23).

*** For the veil to come off the eyes of Jews as they prepare for and observe this wonderful season of Passover. That they will have revealed to them in the Passover Lamb the *“Lamb of God, which carries away the sin of the world.”*** (John 1:29).

* That they will have the veil lifted from their eyes and come into the salvation and redemption of the Lamb who sits on the throne. *“For outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.”*(Revelation 22:15).

1) “Magical Seders ahead with Harry Potter Haggadah”: *The Jewish Chronicle* (Online), 31 March 31, 2017.

2) Ibid.

BECAUSE BY THE TIME YOU RECEIVE NEXT WEEK’S “UPDATE” PASSOVER WILL HAVE ALREADY ARRIVED, WE WOULD SHARE WITH YOU NOW SOME THOUGHTS TO ASSIST OUR UNDERSTANDING AND INTERCESSION IN PREPARATION FOR THIS SPECIAL SEASON!

PASSOVER 2017/5777



“Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed, Messiah (Christ), our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth”

(I Corinthians 5:7-8).

Monday April 10th at sundown Jews throughout the world will be gathered round tables in obedience to the command in Exodus 12:14, *“So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance.”* They will have cleaned leaven from their homes and will begin a week of eating only unleavened bread (Hebrew: *matzot*; Ex. 12:17-20). The word *Pesach* (Passover) comes from the Hebrew verb *lifso'ach* which means “to skip”. When the scourge passed through Egypt, those with the blood of the lamb on their doorposts were ‘skipped’ the

judgment which was coming upon the gods of Egypt, and those who worshipped them. The meal is celebrated at a *seder* table. Seder means “order”. In modern Hebrew the word for ‘o.k.’ is *b’seder*—literally, ‘in order’. So, at the Seder table is presented an “ordered” account, both through reading and having a meal, of what God did on that first occasion. During the course of the meal, most families are guided by a book called a *Haggadah*. This word means “the telling” and is taken from Exodus 13:8, “*And you shall tell your son on that day, saying, ‘It is because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt’*”. Although the book contains remarks and theories by revered rabbis here and there, it is primarily a straightforward account of God’s deliverance of His people Israel from bondage in Egypt, interspersed with wonderful psalms, and other Biblical passages—many of which reference God’s *yeshu’AH*—His “salvation”, and the coming Messiah.

At the heart of this “telling” as it has come down to our day is an addition called *Afikomen*. The word comes from a Greek word, meaning literally “that which comes after” or even, “the one who came”. At the beginning of the Seder three pieces of matza are placed into a three-fold pocket—but the piece going into the middle compartment is first broken. Part of this broken piece of unleavened bread is placed in the middle pocket; the other piece, the *Afikomen*, is wrapped up and hidden away. After the meal, the children will seek the *Afikomen*... and the one who finds it will be given a redemption-price reward. Then all the participants at the table eat a portion of the *Afikomen* for dessert. Modern-day matza (or matzo) is unleavened, pierced and striped from the heat in baking. According to the Mishna, the *Afikomen* is a substitute for the “Korban Pesach”—the Passover Sacrifice, which was the last thing eaten at seders during the First and Second Temple periods. It all seems so clear! A piece of unleavened bread, bruised and pierced is broken off, wrapped and hidden away (yet is still present with the tri-partite “oneness” in the pocket). When it is found by those who have sought it as little children, it brings great joy.

There is so much deep truth inserted by the *Ruach haKodesh*— “Holy Spirit” into the Hebrew traditions, yet there is still a veil over the hearts of most of our people, and they do not see. It has actually been claimed that there is ample indication regarding the tradition of the *Afikomen*, that Yeshua (Jesus) Himself may have instituted this practice, which then found its way into traditional observance because of the early Messianic Jews (See “The Meaning and Importance of the Jewish Holidays” by John Fischer, *Sharing Bible*, Messianic Vision, 1989, p.40.)

Passover Week is also called in the Bible the “Feast of Unleavened Bread” (Hebrew: *Chag Matzot*). It lasts for seven days, beginning with the *Seder* on the evening of the 14th day of Aviv/Nisan (the First Month). The first and last days of the week are to be observed as Sabbaths (Leviticus 23:7-8). The days between these two “Sabbaths” are called *chol ha’mo’ed*... which means the “common” or “every-day normal” period of time between two set-apart (i.e. “holy”) days. During this week Israel is commanded to eat *matzot*— “un-leavened” bread—nor is any

leavening agent to be found in her dwellings for the seven days. We will have more to say about this Feast of Unleavened Bread next week!

BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF THIS HOLY WEEK PLEASE PRAY:

***For the Light of Life to shine into our dwellings and hearts...exposing any “leaven” which needs to be cleansed.**

***For Light to shine over *Seder* tables in Israel and around the world, to reveal the Truth of the “*Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world*”—who was separated from the Father while remaining one with Him, born in Bethlehem (lit: “bread-house”), bruised and pierced, cut off from mankind and hidden in the earth—the Lamb of God who atones for and takes away the sin of humankind—Who may be found by all who become like little children and seek; and whose finding brings Life, and Nourishment and Joy!**

***For God’s protection over Israel during this two-week period when children are out of school and many families are out and about Israel enjoying the holidays.**

THIS WEEK’S TORAH PORTION:

From ancient times there has been a weekly portion (Parashah) from the first five books of Moses (The Torah) and an ending (Haftarah) from the Prophets read on the Sabbath in synagogues around the world. This portion is given a Hebrew name drawn from the opening words of the Torah passage. An illustration of this practice appears to have been recorded in Luke 4:16 where Yeshua (Jesus) arrived in the synagogue in Nazareth and was asked to read the portion (Isaiah 61) from the Prophets. We have found that in perusing these weekly readings, not only are we provided opportunity to identify in the context of God’s Word with millions of Jewish people around the world, but very often the Holy Spirit will illumine specific passages pertinent that week in our intercession for the Land and people of Israel. The Haftarah, unless otherwise noted, will be that read in Ashkenazy synagogues around the world. The references for all texts are those found in English translations of the Scriptures.

The readings for this week 2-8 April 2017 are called *Tsav*— “Command”.

TORAH: Leviticus 6:8—8:36

HAFTARAH: Malachi 3:4—4:6 (*Shabbat haGadol*)

Note: On the Shabbat preceding the beginning of Passover (*Shabbat haGadol*— “The Great Shabbat”) the regular Haftarah (In this case Jeremiah 7:21—8:3, 9:23-24) is replaced by the above reading from Malachi. The name comes from the fact that this passage is centered around a call to prepare for the coming Great Day (*Yom haGadol*) of the LORD.

TORAH

Leviticus 6:8—8:36

In this week's readings, Moses is told to command Aaron and his sons concerning the offerings they will shortly begin making before God. Careful instruction is made concerning each of these—with emphasis on the holiness of the priest's activities. Then Aaron and his sons are then consecrated, clothed in their holy garments and anointed, and atonement is made for them before they begin their duties on behalf of the people.

HAFTARAH

SHABBAT HAGADOL

Malachi 3:4—4:6

The Sabbath preceding Passover is called *Shabbat HaGadol*—the “Great Sabbath”. It takes its name from *Yom Yehovah haGadol v’haNorah*— “*The Great and dreadful day of the LORD*” found in Malachi 4:5 of the special *Haftarah* which is read on this occasion. It is an important time for soberly “taking account” of the Day which is coming “burning like an oven” ...but also for taking heart from God's promise that “*to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings!*”

***Malachi 3:16-18.** “*Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD listened and heard; so a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who meditate on His name. ‘They shall be Mine,’ says the LORD of Armies, ‘On the day that I make them my jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him.’ Then you shall again discern between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him.*” This passage shows that believers who spend time with other believers in conversation characterized by the Fear of the Lord, and who also spend time meditating on the attributes signified by His name—these will be ones who are granted discernment so as to be spared the deception which will prevail more and more until the Lord's return (Matt. 24:4, 11, 24; Daniel 8:25).

***Malachi 4:1.** “*For behold, the Day is coming, burning like an oven...*”

As darkness gathers (John 9:4; Daniel 12:1-3) we must as believers hold to each other, listening, “*not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together...as we see the Day approaching* (Hebrews 10:24-25). As the world refuses to wait on God's command, drawing instead the fire of His wrath, another voice will be calling— “*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the congregations . . .*” (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; 13:9).

Next week at *seders* around the world, Jews will put a glass of wine out on the porch “for Elijah”. At the end of the *seder* someone (often a child) will be sent out to see if he “came”. It is a charming tradition—but one related to a very serious Word from God, who has promised that He will “*send Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful Day of the*

LORD” (Malachi 4:5). Yeshua (Jesus) affirmed that “*To be sure, Elijah comes and will restore all things.*”, even though he had already “come” in the form of John the Baptizer, yet gone unrecognized. However may be the ultimate form of his next coming, the awakened body of Messiah in the land of Israel is in great need of the discernment and power of the gifts and office of prophet which he represented. **PLEASE PRAY:** For the desire for and discernment of these gifts in Israel—and that this time their manifestation not be unrecognized!

“Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy...For the testimony of Yeshua (Jesus) is the spirit of prophecy” (I Cor. 14:1; Rev. 19:10).



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[Passover and the Week of the Festival of Unleavened Bread begin Monday evening April 10th. There will be special Passover readings through the week and on *Shabbat Chol haMoed* 15 April. The next in the regular cycle of Torah readings (*Shmini*—“Eighth”) will continue on 22 April.]

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