

ISRAEL PRAYER UPDATE

Glory of Zion International Ministries



PASSOVER 2018/5778 (Cont'd)



1. Passover week in Israel continues: The Feast of Unleavened Bread

“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”

(1 Corinthians 5:7-8)

Today (Monday) is the 3rd day of Passover Week—or, as it is Biblically known, the Feast of Unleavened Bread. For weeks before the beginning of Passover, many Jewish families have been busy with Passover-cleaning (a bit like “spring cleaning” in the west!). During the last week, the focus narrowed down to the Biblical instruction, “*no leaven shall be seen among you in all your*

territory for seven days.” (Deut. 16:4). During those last days, one might see in many places round Jerusalem—in fields, even on street corners—small fires set up by observant Jews. These served as posts to which last remnants of *hametz* (leavening agents or food containing them) might be brought to be disposed of. All in preparation for the beginning Friday evening of the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread (Hebrew: *Chag-Matzot*).

For seven days, in observant homes and restaurants there is no bread made with yeast. A growing number of “breads” without yeast are now available. And there are many recipes for cooking or baking with *matza* meal, void of rising agents. But there is no regular bread. In Jerusalem, most stores have placed paper screens over the sections containing yeast—so that for a week it will not “be seen.” And bakeries, pizza-parlors and falafel stands using pita pocket-bread have simply closed down for the week.

For some it may come as a surprise to discover that the Scriptures actually have quite a lot more to say regarding observance of the “Week of Matzah” than they do regarding the evening of “Passover” itself. When grouped with *Shavuot* (Pentecost) and *Succot* (Tabernacles) as one of the major festivals requiring annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem, this one, instead of being called “Passover”, is always referred to as the “Feast of Unleavened Bread” (Exodus 23:14-15; Exodus 34:18-22; Deut. 16:16; II Chron. 8:13). Passover was one evening, the Feast of Unleavened Bread lasts an entire week. All leaven (*hametz*) was to be cleaned out of the house. For all of this week, God’s people were to eat a different *kind* of bread!

Throughout the year, Israel is free to eat normal bread. However, in order to make it rise, that requires that a separate “life” be added to the dough. But that life-agent will not last for long on its own. Once yeast has become old, we say that it is “dead.” The “life” placed into normal bread is a life which must eventually die.

For one “complete” week out of the year, Israel was to eat bread which did not have this “outside life” added to it. There is a picture here: “*Man* (Hebrew: “the Adam”) *does not live by bread alone, but by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD*” (Deut. 8:3). From the Father would come forth “Living Bread”...to provide us with heavenly life for *every day* of our week! This “Living Bread” does not have any temporary, foreign, dying life in it! His name is Yeshua (“YHWH is Salvation”)—and He *is* Life! He actually came into the world in *Beit-Lehem* (Hebrew: “House of Bread”). He called Himself the “Bread of God” sent down by the Father to give life to the world. And He promised that whoever partakes of this bread will *live forever* (John 6:34-33, 58).

PLEASE PRAY:

* That as Israel progresses through these seven days of “Unleavened Bread”—she will receive heavenly illumination, that a hunger will awaken within her for the *Bread which came down from Heaven*.

* For the illumination of the Holy Spirit to grant understanding of His Word which was read around *seder* tables last Friday evening: that throughout the week Israel will be pointed towards the Lamb who was slain for our salvation from sin, to the Bread of Heaven who was bodily raised from the

dead, providing eternal life for all who will believe.

* God's Shalom and Divine Protection over Israel and her borders throughout this week, when children are out of school and much of Israel is enjoying a holiday. ***This past weekend, on Passover day itself, the terrorist organization Hamas, which controls the Gaza strip, forced its citizens into a massive demonstration along the border fence separating Gaza from Israel.*** Although billed as a peaceful demonstration, it was most certainly not planned as such. Violence broke out immediately, with militant elements hurling Molotov cocktails, stones, metal slingshot projectiles and in some cases using firearms at Israeli troops guarding the border. In the course of the day, some 17 were killed (a majority being identified as militants) and many were injured, although by no means so many as the number put out for propaganda purposes to the media. Scorning the lives of their citizens, the organizers even sent little children up to the fence, and released highly edited videos, including one purporting to show Israeli troops shooting a demonstrator in the back. Israel has known for days of the careful planning for this demonstration, and its purpose. Unsurprisingly, the Israeli protection of its borders immediately resulted in an emergency meeting being called in the UN regarding the Israeli "massacre"—with the Secretary General calling for an independent investigation into the loss of life. Hamas has declared the demonstrations will continue until the anniversary of Israel's statehood, and that they have other "surprises" planned. (A part of Hamas' charter still calls for the annihilation of the "Zionist" presence in Palestine.) **Please pray for the God who has promised** *"Violence[Hebrew: hamas] will not be heard again in your land, nor devastation or destruction within your borders, but you will call your walls salvation, and your gates praise"* (Isaiah 60:18) to quiet the violence on Israel's border with Gaza (and her northern border with Hezbollah). Pray for mercy over the millions in bondage to a violent and Godless regime in Gaza...that the "Strong Man" there will fall, the curse of violence will be broken, and they will be shown the Way to life, hope and peace with Israel (Zechariah 9:5-7). Pray for vigilance, wisdom, integrity, and where possible, compassion in the soldiers of Israel charged with guarding their borders.

PRAY THAT ISRAEL WILL EXPERIENCE THE PEACE AND JOY OF THE LORD AS THEY CONTINUE THROUGH THIS COMING FRIDAY TO CELEBRATE HIS DELIVERANCE AND PROVISION DURING THE FESTIVAL OF UNLEAVENED BREAD!

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.



Pray for the presence of *Ruach haKodesh*—the Holy Spirit/Holy Wind—to attend the Holy Word which will be read throughout the week of Passover!

READINGS FOR THE FESTIVAL OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

Provided for those of our readers who may wish to follow the passages read next Saturday and the week following in synagogues around the world.

**It is customary at some point during Passover Week to read
The Song of Songs (Song of Solomon)**

Day 3 (Monday 2 April): Exodus 13:1-16; Numbers 28:16-25

The Exodus passage recounts the LORD's instructions immediately following the Children of Israel's coming out on the night of the first Passover. Israel is admonished to consecrate to the LORD all the firstborn. She is regularly to remember this day in which she went out of Egypt, "out of the house of bondage". She is to remember to celebrate this Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days each year.

Day 4 (Tuesday 3 April): Exodus 22:25—23:19; Numbers 28:16-25

The Exodus passage includes among a list of civil laws, a further instruction regarding celebration of three annual feasts to the LORD: the *Feast of Unleavened Bread*, in the month of *Aviv* (First Month, *Nisan*) in the Spring; the *Feast of (Spring) Harvest* (*Shavuot/Pentecost*); and the *Feast of Ingathering*

(Sukkot in the Fall). At these festivals, all males would appear before Adonai the LORD.

Day 5 (Wednesday 4 April): Exodus 34:1-26; Numbers 28:16-25

The Exodus passage recounts the LORD instructing Moses to hew two stone tablets (like the ones he had broken in anger) and ascend Mount Sinai. After he does this, the LORD descends in a cloud and stands with him as he calls upon the name YHVH, then passes by in front of him proclaiming, “YHWH, YHWH God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth, who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who bears away iniquity, transgression and sin...” Verse 18 reads, “You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread. For seven days you are to eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the appointed time in the month of Aviv, for in the month of Aviv you came out of Egypt.”

Day 6 (Thursday 5 April): Exodus 9:1-14; Numbers 28:16-25

The Exodus passage recounts the LORD’s command to Pharaoh to “send My people away that they may serve Me.” If Pharaoh refuses, the LORD will “make a difference between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt” and his hand of judgment will be on Egypt. After this occurs and Pharaoh’s heart again becomes hard, God releases an outbreak of grievous sores on the Egyptians, then hardens the heart of Pharaoh. At the last, Moses rises early and stands before Pharaoh: “Thus says YHVH the Hebrew God, ‘Send my people away, that they may serve Me, for at this time I will send all My plagues to your very heart, and on your servants and on your people, that you may know that there is none like Me in all the earth’” (Exodus 9:13b-14).

Day 7 (Friday 6 April. A “sabbath”): Exodus 13:17—15:26; Numbers 28:16-25

II Samuel 22:1-51

The Exodus passage recounts the Children of Israel going forth in orderly ranks by way of the Red Sea, led by the LORD in a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night. Pharaoh pursues them, the sea opens and they pass through, but the Egyptian armies are destroyed, and on the further shore they sing *Shir haYam* (The “Song of the Sea”), “Sing to YHVH for He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and rider He has thrown into the sea!” Traveling on the LORD sweetens the bitter waters at Marah by having Moses throw a tree into it. The people are admonished, “If you diligently heed the voice of YHVH your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the LORD who heals you” (Exodus 15:26). *The Haftarah from II Samuel* is a wonderful Psalm which “David spoke to the LORD...on the day that the LORD had delivered him from the hand of all his enemies” (This Psalm also appears in the Psalter as Psalm 18): “**The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; The God of my strength, in whom I will trust...I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised; So shall I be saved from my enemies...Therefore I will give**

thanks to you, O LORD, among the nations, and sing praises to Your name” (II Samuel 22:1-4, 50).

Day 8 (OBSERVED ONLY OUTSIDE OF ISRAEL) Saturday 7 April

Deuteronomy 15:19—16:17; Numbers 28:19-25

Isaiah 10:32—12:6

[NOTE: In the Diaspora (Jewish communities outside of Israel) the Passover season includes an extra day, which this year falls on a Sabbath, with its own special readings (above). Israel does not observe this “8th day”—so returns this weekend to the regular cycle of readings—*Shmini*: TORAH: Leviticus 9:1—11:47 HAFTARAH: II Samuel 6:1—7:17. This means that for a season, the readings in Israel will be one week ahead of those in the Nations. The two will come back into sync on May 12th. For the purposes of these Updates, we will be following the sequence of passages as read in the Nations.]



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