



*Brethren, my heart's
desire and prayer to
God for Israel is that
they might be saved.*

— ROMANS 10:1

Should Christians Participate in the Passover Seder?

By Michael L. Brown / Townhall.com

Two rabbis argue that Christians should not participate in the *Seder*, the traditional Jewish Passover meal. Rabbis Yehiel E. Poupko and David Sandmel, in a call for respect between the faiths, urge Christians not to engage in their own version of a Passover Seder, especially if it is led by a Messianic Jew (a Jewish believer in Jesus).

First, they argue, the Seder meal as it is celebrated today contains elements that were not known in Jesus' day. So, whatever Passover meal Jesus ate at the Last Supper, it was not the same as the traditional Seder, which developed in later centuries.

Second, the rabbis feel that Christians conducting their own Passover Seders turn something that is sacred to Judaism into a Christian event. They suggest that if Christians want to explore the meaning of the Seder, they should seek an invitation to a traditional Seder where they can learn as a guest. Or

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REMEMBER:

**Passover begins Friday, March 30 (at sunset)
and ends Saturday, April 7 (at sunset)
Palm Sunday is March 25, Easter is Sunday, April 1**

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Bible Prophecy p.4

Passover Celebration Clearly Points to Yeshua

By Ron Cantor
CharismaNews.com

Every year at Passover, Jewish people all over the world come together and act out the death and resurrection of Jesus (Yeshua, in Hebrew).

Unwittingly, Jewish families joyfully carry out a tradition that looks just like the work of Yeshua 2,000 years ago. John the Baptist saw his cousin Yeshua coming toward him. In John 1, he confessed: *"Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"*

The idea of shedding a lamb's blood to cover one's sin comes from the Passover narrative. The

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Should Christians Participate ... *continued from cover*

ask the local rabbi to instruct them in the Seder's meaning. But this sacred meal must not be co-opted by Christians.

How should we Christ-followers respond?

I would first ask a question: How many Christians or churches have their own Passover Seders? My guess is that almost all are held in conjunction with Messianic Jews. And that, I believe, is the real rub for these rabbis.

It is common at this time of the year for Jewish believers in Jesus to host special church events with titles like, "Messiah in the Passover Seder." During these presentations, which can draw many hundreds of people, the teaching will point to Jesus/Yeshua, the Lamb of God, as the centerpiece of the Passover. He is the One who paved the way for a deliverance even greater than the Exodus from Egypt. He is the One whose blood redeems us from God's judgment. He is the Passover Lamb! So, during the meal, the participants look back to the Exodus, they look back to the Cross, and they celebrate the Jewish roots of their faith.

"But," someone responds, "that's what these rabbis protest. Jesus didn't celebrate the same meal, and it's wrong to transform Jewish traditions into a platform for preaching the Christian message."

Actually, as a Messianic Jew myself—I have engaged in serious, academic dialogue with my Jewish community for the last 45+ years—I understand this objection. How would we feel if Muslims celebrated Communion but saw in it a prophecy of Mohammed, co-opting something sacred to us? But here the comparison breaks down.

Muslims do not believe in the crucifixion of Jesus, whereas we *do* believe in the Passover celebration, beginning with the Exodus and culminating in Messiah's resurrection. Jesus *did* celebrate a traditional (for His day) Jewish meal at the Last Supper. (Remember: Jesus was called rabbi—not reverend—and the Passover Lamb: 1 Corinthians 5:7.)

Before they accepted Jesus, many Messianic Jews grew up celebrating the Seder. **Once they came to faith, the Seder took on much more meaning.** That's why they celebrate Passover in their congregations, and why they teach the Seder's meaning at churches. To them, it's all about redemption, deliverance, the faithfulness of God and His promises to Israel, and all about Jesus the Messiah.

Why shouldn't they celebrate it and teach other Believers the beauty and meaning of the Seder from their unique, Messianic Jewish perspective? And why shouldn't Christians learn more about the Jewish roots of their faith? The stain of anti-Semitism has polluted Church history for centuries; the more Christians appreciate the Jewish roots of their faith, the less likely this ugly plague will resurface.

Mitch Glaser and Darrell Bock, both Jewish believers in Jesus, [answered](#) the rabbis' argument. They noted correctly that the question of whether or not Jesus celebrated a Passover Seder by today's standards is moot. He observed the Passover in the same way as any other first-century Jew. The Seder can draw Jews and Christians closer together rather than driving another wedge between our faith communities.

What concerns them is when Christians do not identify with the Jewish people and the Jewish background of their faith. Moreover, they write, "we simply cannot rob Christians of their heritage in Jesus—especially the events of the Last Supper, which was clearly a type of Passover celebration."

While Christians remember this Last Supper every time we take Holy Communion, only in the context of the Passover meal do we understand the roots of that momentous meal: Jesus died as our Passover Lamb.

As Jews around the world gather for Passover, they have no reason to be disturbed by Christian celebrations of Passover. Rather, I encourage them to ask the questions: Why is this meal important to Christians too? Might they have some insight? ★





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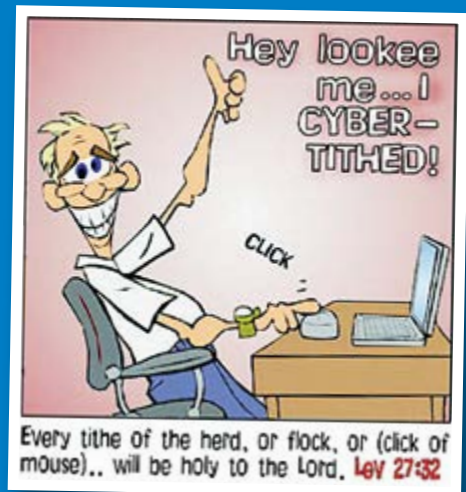
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P.O. Box 12268, Dallas TX 75225. ★

The Back Pew – Jeff Larson



Bible Prophecy: The Kingdom & Eternity

BY ZOLA LEVITT



In January, [Zola's article](#) picked up Tony's Bible prophecy study with the Marriage and then in February, [the Second Coming](#). This month, it concludes with the Kingdom and Eternity.

The Kingdom

This millennium of the Kingdom Age is the true reward of the Church, and it will be quite different from the Church Age we are experiencing now. The social order will be “upside-down”: It will be “sophisticated” to be a Christian, foolish to be an unbeliever. The King Himself shall reign in Jerusalem with us Believers, His Queen.

Jesus took all His teaching from the Old Testament; there was no New Testament at the time He taught His disciples “the things pertaining to the Kingdom.”

The inspired passages of Isaiah and the other prophets make this magnificent Age of God's Triumph very clear. Therefore, the New Testament writers assume that their readers understand the Kingdom, so they begin (after the genealogy) with the Sermon on the Mount, teaching both admission to and laws of the Kingdom, and then its joys (the Beatitudes, in Matt. 5, etc.). See Isaiah 11:4–9.

Isaiah 12 contains the most beautiful and concise description of the Kingdom in the whole Bible. The themes of the Kingdom are: the constant company of the Messiah, total triumph of the saints, and justice and mercy throughout the Earth.

Eternity

After the Kingdom and the Thrones of Judgment, Believers live on in eternity. God will change Heaven, Earth, and Jerusalem — no more seas or water, and therefore no more life as we now know it. We can sample John's description of eternity in Rev. 21:1–7.

The very end of the Scriptures, as John describes in Revelation, becomes symbolic and almost incomprehensible (Rev. 21:9ff.). One notable feature is that there will be no Temple (v. 22). There is no need for further sacrifice, or, in effect, for further worship. Everyone will be at one with God and approach Him directly, as did Adam before the fall.

Another interesting feature of eternity is new light. Light was the first thing God created, but now there will be no need of sun or moon because the glory of God

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Greek icon of Second Coming, c.1700, Anonymous, Greece





and the Lamb provide the light (Rev. 21:23).

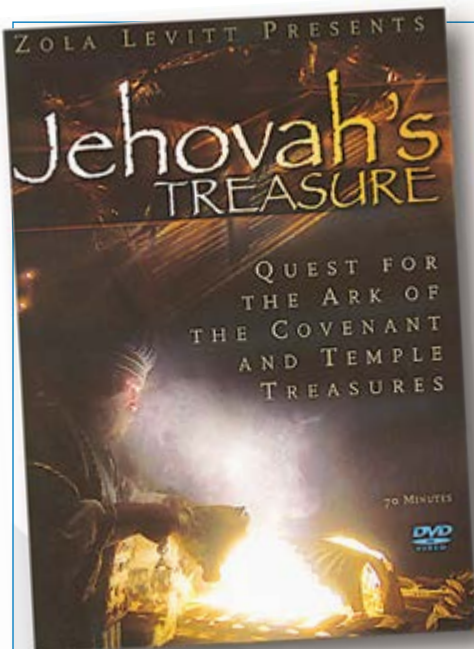
But perhaps the most striking feature of all is that there will be no evil — anywhere. While a certain amount of rebellion occurs even in the Kingdom, eternity will be utterly free of it (Rev. 21:8, 26–27).

And remember, this is only the beginning!

John, after seeing all these things, wrote that the thing to do was pray now for the soon coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. John the Apostle, New Testament saint and member of the Church, awaited the Rapture fervently — and so should we. The last verses of the Bible provide a more-than-fitting conclusion for this discussion. John’s final prayer must be our ultimate prayer. In view of all he had seen in this stunning Revelation of Jesus Christ, John uttered simply:

*He which testifieth these things
saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen.
Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The
grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be
with you all. Amen.
— Rev. 22:20–21*

Such teaching as this study is our bread and butter as we pursue our mission. Please remember this ministry in your giving and prayers. We continue husbanding funds and expanding our outreach. Enough said. ★



Jehovah's Treasure *Quest for the Ark of the Covenant and Temple Treasures* DVD

This 70-minute TV special on DVD uniquely documents the unearthing of two extraordinary tunnels in the Judean Desert, discovered after the Copper Scroll (one of the Dead Sea Scrolls) indicated that Temple treasures were buried all over Israel, some near the caves of Qumran where the Scrolls were discovered.

Nowhere else in all of Israel has anyone found tunnels like these. Is history finally going to unleash its most profound desert secrets?

Hosanna! Save Us!

Kirsten Hart
Studio co-host of
Zola Levitt Presents



Christ's Entry into Jerusalem, Jean-Hippolyte Flandrin, ca. 1842

Many churches across America will sing “Hosanna” on Palm Sunday, believing that when the Jewish people called out this word as Yeshua rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, they meant it as a sort of praise to Him. But I recently learned that “Hosanna” was actually a message: “Save us from Rome!” The people wanted a savior to rescue them from their oppressors.

If I'd been a Jewish woman in Yeshua's time, like other women I would have been looking for a Messiah who was a military leader to save us from the Roman oppression; or, more specifically, someone just like Judah Maccabee (Maccabeus), please.

Bible readers in 2018 too readily denigrate the Jewish people of Jesus' day for not accepting and recognizing Yeshua ben Yosef as the Messiah. But, honestly, I think I would have had my doubts, too.

Understanding the “Silent Years”

I just finished course #8 of the Institute of Jewish-Christian Studies (a twelve-part correspondence course co-authored by Dr. Jeffrey Seif and Zola and offered by our ministry.* If you haven't taken the Institute courses with their mail-in tests, I highly recommend you do so.) Course #8 is titled “Between The Testaments.” Growing up in the Church, I've always viewed those roughly 400 years as “silent” — nothing much happening in Israel, people living life in a humdrum way. With no prophet of God and no Scripture written, it was a standstill in the Biblical realm. Or so we thought.

Sunday school lessons taught us that *finally*, after the whole interTestamental period, God once again revealed Himself through His Son in the town of Bethlehem, breaking the silence. And, yes, that's what most of our Bible versions tell us. **Ahhhh, but those “silent years” weren't actually so silent.**

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* SIDE NOTE:

See [p. 20](#) for more information about the twelve-part correspondence course, [The Institute of Jewish-Christian Studies](#), co-authored by Jeffrey Seif and Zola Levitt.



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The years between the writings of Malachi and Matthew found Israel, as a people and a nation, in some very hostile and critical periods of survival. The Seleucid emperor Antiochus IV Epiphanes sought to destroy the Jewish faith and take the people down to their knees. Through the defilement of the Temple and the utter desecration of all that was holy to the Jews, a Jewish leader rose up, a savior for the people. If you have read anything about Hanukkah (the Feast of Dedication), you know this story.

Disgusted with the Greek influence, horrific rule of Antiochus, and the abomination of desolation in the Temple, a Jewish priest, Mattathias ben (son of) Johanan, started a revolt that his son Judah finished. Judah, a warrior for the Jewish people, carried the nickname “the Hammer” because of his hard blows in battle. With a strong arm, keen military wisdom, and, of course, the LORD, Judah defeated Antiochus and his armies. Thinking Judah to be the promised Messiah, the nation of Israel rejoiced with the victory that Judah and the Maccabees (his followers) brought to Jerusalem. The sacred oil miraculously lasted, and the Temple, under Judah, was once again restored and worship re-established.

For generations thereafter, the Jewish people celebrated the Feast of Dedication, teaching their children the stories of how God used the Maccabees to overthrow the Syrians. Then the Romans conquered Israel. This God-promised land has always been a place for conquering. After the 63 B.C. takeover by Rome, tyranny against the Jewish people became part of everyday life. The Hebrew people began looking for a new Judah Maccabee to save them from oppression. An aggressive revolt saved them from Antiochus. Revolution was a proven strategy.

After the Maccabees

Years later, a baby was born. A helpless infant was God’s answer to tyranny? With rulers like the Romans, a strong, powerful hand was the only way to overcome such cruelty ... or so the thinking went. If I had seen my family chased down by Roman soldiers rampaging through my village, I too might have scoffed at the idea that a baby born to two Nazarenes was God’s solution.

Because we have the incredible hindsight from living when we do, we can see how God’s plan was perfect, though different from what the Jewish people expected. A Messiah who makes war with words instead of a brawny guy nicknamed “the Hammer” contradicted successful battlefield strategies. And on top of Yeshua not being a military leader, His actions often seemed contrary to the Torah: He questioned the authorities and went against the grain.

Even His disciples were anxious for the “Warrior Messiah” to take His rightful place in leadership. The Kingdom of God was thought to be a physical kingdom that would forcibly overthrow the Romans. Until the very end, His followers waited for their “Hammer” to strike the decisive blow. They did not expect a Messiah and King of the Jews to end His earthly reign by dying on a cross.

The next time you wonder how the Jewish people could have missed the signs that Jesus was their Messiah, put yourself in their position. Their cry of “HOSANNA” to Jesus on Palm Sunday was a plea for Him to “save/rescue us” from the oppressors. He did save them just seven days later.

We know that He ultimately wins in the end, and we know that Yeshua conquered death. But we should understand what the Jewish people were hoping for and why His ministry looked so different from what they expected. The next time you talk about Yeshua to someone Jewish, be sure to put yourself “in their shoes” and speak from a place of love, compassion, and knowledge.

[Palm Sunday is March 25 this year.](#) ★

Islam: Peaceful or Violent?



BY WILLIAM KILPATRICK (r) TheCatholicThing.org

When President Trump announced that America would move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, the Muslim world reacted with outrage and threats. Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas warned of “dangerous consequences.” The spokesman for Turkish president Erdoğan warned that the move was a “grave mistake” because “Jerusalem is our red line.”

Leaders of the Western world reacted in similar fashion. Pope Francis, British Prime Minister Theresa May, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and French President Emmanuel Macron all criticized Trump’s announcement. Meanwhile, the patriarchs and heads of local churches in Jerusalem sent Trump a letter warning that a transfer “will yield increased hatred, conflict, violence, and suffering in Jerusalem.”

There is an obvious contradiction here. As Robert Spencer of Jihad Watch pointed out, these leaders have a record of defending Islam as a religion of peace and tolerance that is being perverted by a handful of extremists. Pope Francis has said, “Authentic Islam and the proper reading of the Koran are opposed to every form of violence.”



But if that’s what they really believe, why worry that moving an embassy would create — quoting the Jerusalem church leaders’ letter — “hatred, conflict, violence, and suffering”?

By assuming that Muslims would riot over the announcement, says Spencer, the pope and other leaders are inadvertently admitting the truth about Islam: numerous incitements to violence and hatred in the Koran and Sunnah do lead to Muslims behaving violently at the drop of a hat, or the move of an embassy.

After all, we are not talking here about a tiny minority whose actions would be rejected by the great majority, but about widespread rioting and violence on a global scale — “plunging the region and the world into a fire with no end in sight,” as Turkey’s Deputy Prime Minister Bekir Bozdağ put it. And, apparently, the “fire” would be justified because, as Saudi King Salman said, the move “would constitute a flagrant provocation of Muslims all over the world.” It’s a safe bet that King Salman understands Islam better than do Merkel, Macron, May, and the pope. Yet Salman is more concerned than they are.

The Saudi king seems to assume that Muslims are highly prone to violence and easily provoked because their religion and religious leaders tell them to be. Moreover, almost anything might be considered provocative. Last July, a called-for “day of rage” resulted in the murder of an Israeli family because security metal detectors were installed on the Temple Mount. Even Pope Benedict’s measured address to an academic gathering at the University of Regensburg led to global rioting and killing.

Religious and secular leaders claim that Islam is a religion of peace and justice, yet they warn us not to provoke its followers in any way. Don’t recognize Jerusalem as Israel’s capital. Don’t draw cartoons that might offend Muslims. Don’t wear religious symbols that might provoke them. Don’t ring

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church bells in the vicinity of Muslims. Don't criticize them for persecuting Christians because, as Ahmed al-Tayeb, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar University told Pope Francis, such criticism is a "red line" that must not be crossed.

"Just stay quiet and you'll be okay." That's what Mohamed Atta told the passengers on American Airlines flight 11 shortly before it flew into the World Trade Center. It wasn't good advice then, and it's not good advice now. As Islam expands its global reach, it's becoming increasingly evident that the "don't-do-anything-to-provoke-them" policy isn't working, and never will.

[At the end of every television program and newsletter, we sign off "Sha'alu Shalom Yerushalayim." We Believers must continue praying for the peace of Jerusalem. \(Ps. 122:6\) — Kirsten](#) ★

Passover Celebration ... *continued from cover sidebar*

Israelites put the blood of a pure lamb on the doorposts of their homes, causing the Angel of Death to pass over their house.

In the Passover meal, *matzoh* (unleavened bread) plays an important role. The cracker-like bread had the unique characteristics that Isaiah claimed the Messiah would have. The prophet says, "*He was pierced for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, and by His stripes we are healed*" (Is. 53:5).

The matzoh is pierced, bruised, and striped, just as Yeshua's body was. But matzoh is uniquely like Yeshua in another, very obvious way: it has no leaven. Leaven in the Scriptures often symbolizes sin.

Yeshua took this piece of unleavened bread from the Passover table and said, "*This is my body.*" In doing so, he did what no other man before or since could do: He claimed to be sinless.

Just as the Passover lamb had to be without defect (Ex. 12:5), Yeshua had to be sinless. Simon Peter picks up on the Passover theme and says,

For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed ... but with the precious blood of Messiah, a lamb without blemish or defect. — 1 Pet. 1:18-19

In the modern Passover Seder, the leader takes the middle piece of matzoh and breaks it in half. In the same way, Yeshua broke the bread and said, "*Take, eat; this is My body*

which is broken for you" (1 Cor. 11:24).

The leader then takes one of the just-broken pieces (the *Afikoman*) and wraps it in a white linen napkin. Yeshua was taken down from the cross, and His dead body was wrapped in white linen.

Next, the leader hides the wrapped *Afikoman*, and the children search for it after the third cup of wine (the cup of redemption). The finder brings it back to the leader for a prize. Likewise, Yeshua was hidden away for three days but did not stay hidden. He rose from the dead by the power of the Spirit of God. When we find Him, we too receive a reward, but far greater than the going rate of \$5. We receive redemption, the forgiveness of sins, and eternal life.

Some scholars claim that *Afikoman* is Greek for "*I will come.*" Pretty powerful!

So, how did such an overt picture of Yeshua end up in the Jewish Passover Seder? No one knows for sure. But we do know that the Messianic and non-Messianic Jews intermingled for some time after the Resurrection—possibly until the destruction of Jerusalem in 135 A.D. However it happened and whether intended or not, it clearly points to Yeshua.

[Articles like this remind me why it's so important for Zola Levitt Presents to stay on the air. Weekly, we emphasize that the Jewish roots of our faith point to Jesus/ Yeshua. I'm thankful for the sacrifice of our Passover Lamb. — David](#) ★



The Last Fare

(FOUND ON THE INTERNET)



I arrived at the address and honked the horn. After a few minutes, I honked again. Since this was the last fare of my shift, I thought about driving away. But instead, I walked to the door and knocked.

After a long pause, the door opened. A small, elderly woman stood before me in a print dress and a hat with a veil, right out of a '40s movie. By her side sat a small suitcase. Behind her, the furniture was covered with sheets.

I took the suitcase to the cab, then returned to assist the woman. She kept thanking me for my kindness.

"I just try to treat my passengers the way I would want my mother treated," I told her.

"You're a good person," she said.

When we got in the cab, she gave me an address and then asked, "Could you drive through downtown?"

"It's not the shortest way," I answered quickly.

"Oh, I don't mind," she said. "I'm in no hurry. I'm on my way to hospice." In the rearview mirror, I could see her eyes glistening.

"I don't have any family left," she continued in a soft voice, "and the doctor says I don't have very long." I quietly reached over and shut off the meter.

**Great
moments
can catch
us unaware.**

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“What route would you like me to take?” I asked.

For the next two hours, we drove through the city, past the building where she had once worked as an elevator operator, through the neighborhood where she and her husband had lived as newlyweds. Sometimes she’d ask me to slow in front of a particular building or corner where she’d sit staring into the darkness, saying nothing.

As the sun was creasing the horizon, she suddenly said, “I’m tired. Let’s go now.”

We drove in silence to the address she had given me. It was a small convalescent home. Two orderlies came out, solicitous and obviously expecting her. I took her small suitcase to the door, where she was already seated in a wheelchair. “How much do I owe you?” she asked, reaching into her purse.

“Nothing,” I answered.

“You have to make a living,” she said.

“There are other passengers,” I responded. I bent and gave her a hug.

“You gave an old woman a moment of joy,” she said. “Thank you.”

I squeezed her hand and then turned and walked into the dim light. Behind me, a door shut. It was the sound of a life closing.

For the rest of the day, I wondered: What if she had gotten an angry driver, or one impatient to end the shift? What if I had refused the fare, or had honked once and driven away? On quick review, I don’t think that I’ve done anything more important in my life.

We’re conditioned to think that our lives revolve around great moments. But great moments can catch us unaware, beautifully wrapped in what many consider a small one. People may not remember exactly what you did or said, but they will always remember how you made them feel. ★



I Call You Friend

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- *The Lord Is So Good*
- *O Holy One*
- *Adonai Adonaynu*
- *Oh Lord, Our Lord*
- *One Thing I Have Asked*

Christians and Kosher Laws

Dr. Todd Baker
Zola Levitt Ministries
Staff Theologian



Q. Should Christians follow kosher laws, and are they mandatory for the Church today?

A. While you can certainly follow Jewish dietary laws (*kashrut*), the New Covenant gives no mandate for the Believer. **Christ did away with the dietary laws from the Law of Moses.** They were part and parcel of the Old Covenant. Thus, Paul writes in Colossians 2:14–16 that Christians are not under these kinds of dietary restrictions because the restrictions foreshadowed in one way or another the Person and work of Messiah.

What we eat or do not eat under the New Covenant is not an issue. Neither does it produce a better standing with the Lord since **one is justified by faith in Jesus alone and not by the works of the Law**, such as following *kashrut* (Galatians 2:16).

"But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse."

— 1 Corinthians 8:8

Impurity is not what you eat or don't eat; it is a matter of the heart, as Jesus clearly declared in Mark 7:14–23. The whole idea of imposing a dietary ritual for the New Testament Believer is not Scriptural. Those laws have passed away, and we are under the unveiled and permanent promises of the New Covenant (see 2 Corinthians 3:7–18).

"For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

— Romans 14:17 ★



*Peter's vision of a sheet with animals, from Acts 10; illustrator unknown, from *Treasures of the Bible* (pub. 1894)*



Two Days on Mission

To the Jew First (TJF) team member August Rosado and I spent a cold and rainy Shabbat in Jerusalem handing out three Bibles. In the afternoon, we talked with **Yehudit**, a 20-year-old Jewish IDF (Israel Defense Forces) soldier with whom we shared about our recent visit to modern-day Bethany and the tomb of Lazarus, a man that Israel's Messiah loved (John 11:3). We explained to Yehudit that Messiah's greatest miracle — outside of His own resurrection from the dead — took place in Bethany. That's where Yeshua raised his dead friend back to life. Lazarus had been dead and buried for four days — excellent proof that He is the "resurrection and the life" (John 11:25).



We personalized this miracle for Yehudit by telling her that the promised Messiah, for whom the Jewish people are still looking, has already come in the Person and power of Yeshua. Because Yeshua conquered death — and promises to give eternal life to all who believe Him — those who accept His promise have their sins forgiven. All of these promises about the Messiah can be found in the *Tanakh* (Old Testament) and were precisely fulfilled by Yeshua, as found in the *B'rit Hadashah* (New Testament). Yehudit was speechless and exclaimed, "Wow, this is the first time I have

Dr. Todd Baker
ZLM Staff Theologian
TJF Team Leader



heard this, but it is really wonderful news." Now that her interest was piqued, we showed her how the Messiah connects both Jewish Testaments (Old and New) together.

Yehudit eagerly accepted a copy of the complete Hebrew Bible from us.

Stepping out of our hotel the next morning, August and I ran into **Eliyahu** and had a rather interesting Gospel witness.

It began when

August mentioned to Eliyahu that his name is a variation of "Elijah," as in the highly revered Old Testament prophet. We elaborated: the Prophet Malachi prophesied that Elijah would come right before the Messiah (Malachi 4:5–6). And the Messiah, who did come, is Yeshua of Nazareth. His way was prepared by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:1–3), who came in the spirit and power of Elijah (Matthew 17:11–13). That was just one of the many First Coming prophecies of Messiah that Yeshua fulfilled, and we excitedly shared this with Eliyahu.

After citing others that were fulfilled by Jesus, we offered Eliyahu a list of prophecies and fulfillments and a copy of the complete Hebrew Bible for him to see the prophecies (in the *Tanakh*) and their fulfillments (in the *B'rit Hadashah*). Praise God Eliyahu accepted and plans to look over the study materials that we gave him about the incomparable Nazarene.

Please pray that the Holy Spirit will anoint Yehudit and Eliyahu to see Messiah in the pages of their Bibles. ★



Cashew or Mischling?

A Note From Mark
by **Mark Levitt**
ZLM Director



“Cashew” DEFINITION:

A person who is half Catholic and half Jewish (one parent of each religion) or someone who practices from both religions.

My mother, Gay Shannon, was born and raised Catholic. She converted to Judaism before marrying my father Zola, primarily to appease his parents. Her funeral in 1970, in deference to her parents, took place at a Catholic church. Consequently, she could be deemed a Cashew — not in any derogatory sense, of course.

Come to think of it, **couldn't most good Catholics be considered "Cashews"?** Particularly those who read from both Testaments rather than just the “amputated” New? (Zola’s mentor and co-author of seven books, Dr. Thomas McCall, referred to stand-alone New Testaments as “amputated Bibles.”)

Why do the words *good* and *Catholic* go together in my mind as well as *mixed* and *nuts*? Partly because I’ve seen more than one Catholic striving ceaselessly to be good and seeming “self-sanctified” in the process. Sadly, some Protestants appear to sin as often as possible in order for grace to abound (read: get the most out of their free* salvation-through-grace tickets).

When the rubber meets the road, however, sin is a bad bargain, even when its primary penalty (death, Romans 6:23) has been prepaid with a blank check by the Lamb of God. Sin’s opportunity costs often outweigh its tangible consequences more than a Cashew — or anyone — realizes.

Like my mother, I’m tall, fair, and slim.
Like my father, I have a face for radio (Dad

* Salvation isn’t “free” — Yeshua paid the price. Just as this magazine isn’t “free;” donations paid for it.

“Mischling” DEFINITION:

“Mixed blood.” Nazi Germany’s legal term for someone of both Aryan and Jewish ancestry — similar to hybrid, mongrel, or half-breed.

probably would agree). Mom had mixed emotions about my circumcision at eight days, but would have loved my bar mitzvah, which took place three years after my salvation (Thanks, Yeshua!) at Beth Sar Shalom, a Messianic congregation led by Dr. Tom McCall. I was baptized by Dr. W. A. Criswell at the First Baptist Church in downtown Dallas and a second time by Dad in the Jordan River. (No, I don’t believe the second baptism cancels out the first and, thusly, necessitates a third.)

I was even [anointed](#) by the late Moishe Rosen and David Brickner, both of Jews for Jesus. Would the combination of the words *Jews, for, and Jesus* have baffled *der Führer*?

And, would Hitler have considered me a “Cashew,” “Mischling,” or a mixed-up nut not worth sorting out?

More important to me, Dear Reader, is what you happen to think. This November will mark 30 years that every ZLM check paid from your generous offerings has borne my signature. Considering last year’s spate of protests about too few Jews in this ministry, am I Jewish enough to be signing those checks? ★

Nuremberg Laws Race Chart
White circle = Aryan grandparent
Black circle = Jewish grandparent

German (4 white circles)
Mischling grades 1 and 2
Jew (3 or 4 black circles)



ZLM Bulletin Board

Lottery Tickets Overpriced

In January, a 7-Eleven in Port Richey, Florida sold the winning Mega Millions lottery ticket. Prize payments over 29 years would total \$450 million while the lump sum option was \$282 million. Since the odds of winning were one in 302.5 million, the value of

each ticket was only 93 cents (\$282 million divided by 302.5 million = \$.93). But each ticket sold for \$2. Consequently, each purchase was tantamount to throwing away \$1.07 (\$2.00 - \$.93) plus the value of time in buying and handling the ticket.

☆
Pray for
the peace of
Jerusalem



FREE ITEM

Pamphlet of the Month

An effective estate plan addresses four common financial challenges: 1) dying too soon, 2) outliving one's resources, 3) emergencies, and 4) mental/physical disability. The booklet **Better Estate Planning** presents a practical overview of a number of planning tools. Topics include: The will as cornerstone, Placing property in trust, Power of attorney, Joint ownership, Living will, Income and asset management, Welcome tax savings, and Income for life. The Technical Advisory Section discusses federal gift and estate tax considerations. To receive this booklet at no charge, email us at staff@levitt.com or write to our P.O. Box.

3.6 Million Tourists ...

... visited Israel in 2017. According to Israel's Ministry of Tourism statistics, this all-time record represents a 25% increase over 2016. The U.S. accounted for 700,000; Russia 307,000; France 284,000; Germany 202,000; and the UK 185,000. 78% of the tourists went to Jerusalem, 67% to Tel Aviv-Jaffa, and 49% to the Dead Sea. 2017 tourism contributed \$5.8 billion to Israel's economy!



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"Come Home!"

Zola
Tours to
Israel



See [page 36](#)
for details



↑
To
Index

The Passover Connection

by John Parsons
Hebrew for Christians



אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם

“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt...” (Exod. 20:2)

אֲנִי	יְהוָה	אֱלֹהֶיךָ	אֲשֶׁר	הוֹצֵאתִיךָ	מֵאֶרֶץ	מִצְרַיִם
(3) (2) (1)	(1)	(4) (3) (2) (1)	(2) (1)	(4) (3) (2) (1)	(3) (2) (1)	(3) (2) (1)
mitz-ra-yim	me-e-retz	ho-tzei-tee-kha	a-sher	e-lo-hey-kha	Adonai	a-no-khi
Egypt	from the land (of)	brought you out	who	your God	the LORD	I AM

The great Exodus of Israel from Egypt provides the Torah’s central parable: The bondage of the Israelites to Pharaoh represents humanity’s slavery to sin; God’s deliverance from bondage is effected by trusting in the blood of the sacrificial lamb of God; the passage from death to life symbolically comes through baptism into the Sea of Reeds; the journey to truth occurs through the pilgrimage to Sinai, and so on.

Indeed, the Passover redemption in Egypt led directly to revelation given at Sinai, when the LORD God gave the Ten Commandments, beginning: “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery” (Exod. 20:2). It is noteworthy that God referred to Himself using the phrase *asher hotzeteekha me’eretz mitzrayim* (“who brought you out from the land of Egypt”) instead of identifying Himself as the Creator of the heavens and earth (Gen. 1:1). This is because Creation’s purpose is to demonstrate God’s redemptive love, identifying Him as our Savior and Redeemer, as Yeshua — the “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8; 1 Pet. 1:18–20; Eph. 1:4; 2 Tim. 1:9). “All things were created by Him (Yeshua) and for Him,” and in Him all things consist (συνεστηκεν, lit. “stick together”) (Col. 1:16–17).

Thus, Creation begins and ends with the redemptive love of God as manifested in the Person of Yeshua our Savior, the great Lamb of God. He is the Core of Creation — the Aleph and Tav — the Beginning and the End (Isa. 44:6; Rev. 1:17). All that exists was created for Messiah: “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen” (Rom. 11:36).

In this connection, note that the Hebrew word *mitzvah* (usually translated “commandment”) really concerns *connection* to God (the root צוה means to “bind” or “unite”). When God spoke to the people of Israel, each one felt personally spoken to by God, as He used the singular “you.” The very first commandment is to accept the reality of our personal deliverance by the LORD: “I am the LORD your God who brought you (singular) out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery” (Exod. 20:2). In fact, the Torah’s Hebrew text reveals that God used the second person singular (not plural) for all the verbs throughout the Ten Commandments: “you (singular) shall have no other gods beside me”; “you (singular) shall not take the Name of the LORD your God in vain,” and so on. The first commandment, however, sets up all that follows. **Until you personally accept the LORD as your God, willing to connect with Him as your own Deliverer and King, the rest of His commandments are unlikely to be heeded.** ★



Courtesy: The Jerusalem Connection

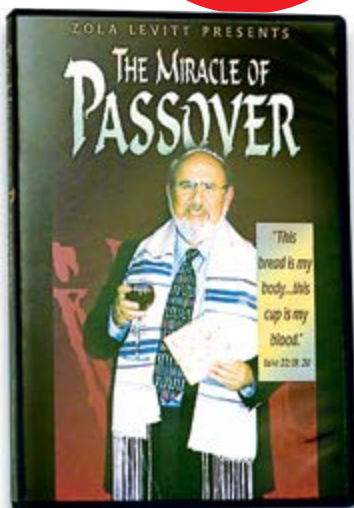
[The Miracle of Passover](#) [DVD, study booklet, CD](#)

(One of our most popular and best-selling titles!)

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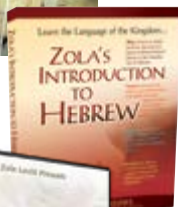
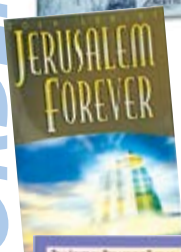
Scripture quotations come from the popular *Complete Jewish Bible*.



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Zola Levitt, a Jewish Believer, was best known as the host of the weekly national television program *Zola Levitt Presents*. He was also widely published, with some fifty books in several languages, and he conducted regular tours to the Holy Land.

Dr. Jeffrey Seif, also a Messianic Jew and co-host of *Zola Levitt Presents* for five years, is an ordained minister and an expert on subjects related to Israel, the Jewish people, and prophecy.

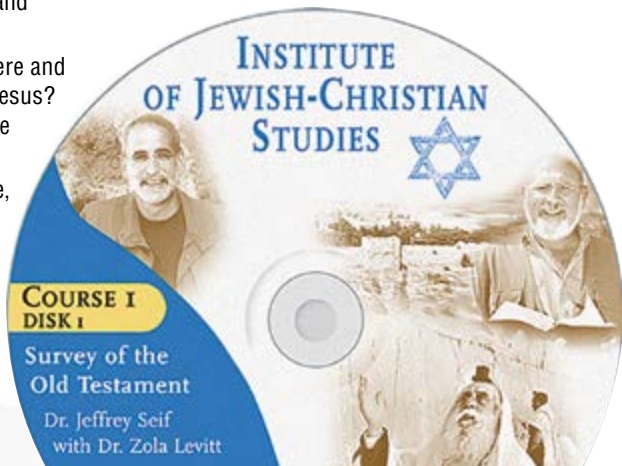
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David and
Kirsten like
this study.
See p. 6.



Ancient Bathrooms and the Crucifixion



BY **KIRSTEN HART** (r) Studio co-host of *Zola Levitt Presents*

Our Zola Tours Mediterranean cruise stops at ancient Ephesus, an amazing city whose streets were *solid marble!* Though only one-tenth of the city has been excavated, exploring it took us all day. One of the spots we learned about was the ancient public bathroom, which provided an unexpected insight to the human life of our Lord.

As our pilgrims walked through the majestic streets and buildings of this enormous city, our guide led us to an area of solid marble that was the public restroom. Thirty-six people could use the “facility” at the same time. Greek technology was advanced and fascinating to learn about.

My aha moment came when our guide was telling us that the wealthy could hire a slave to clean their bottoms after they had finished their business. “In ancient times,” he said, “slaves were paid to take a long stick with an attached sponge dipped in vinegar to clean off the ‘participant.’ It’s the same type of stick that was given to Jesus when he was on the cross.”



Ancient toilets in Ephesus



Christ on the Cross (detail), Carl Heinrich Bloch, 1870, Museum of Natural History (Denmark)

A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus’ lips. — John 19:29

That revelation took my breath away and was all I could think about for the rest of the day. If true, when Yeshua *HaMashiach*, our Savior, was on the cross and thirsty, one of the soldiers took a tool used to clean someone after they used a public toilet, and put it to His mouth.

I’ve read, heard, and sung the words Jesus spoke on the cross my whole life, but I never understood why they put a vinegar-soaked sponge to his lips. Even in His very last moments of human life, our Lord endured complete humiliation in order to redeem you and me.

In this coming year, may God’s living Word become alive deep within your soul. May He give you continued insight and reveal His great love for you. ★





Letters to ZLM

For ministry products and TV programs, visit the [web store](#) and [video archives](#).

Comments from www.levitt.com

From S.S. (NY): I saw *Zola Levitt Presents (ZLP)* on Daystar. What a joy to see the new television format. — Thanks for your support. We also treasure the weekly insights from our Messianic Jewish “boots on the ground in Israel” contributors. — David and Kirsten

From S.W. (MO): [Esther: For Such a Time as This](#) is an awesome series. Definitely ties in with current events, especially in Iran.

From B.W. (WA): I am loving the *Esther* series. And Dr. Seif. Learning! God bless ZLP.

New Witnessing Tool?

Dear ZLM,

Though I always look forward to your monthly *Levitt Letter*, the Bizarro cartoon (*r*) ([December 2017, p. 22](#)) was NOT FUNNY, nor did it have a place in your magazine. An unsaved person would read this and think, “Why bother?” Even my younger family members agree that you should refrain from using such trash in your otherwise fine publication. — B.S. (SC)

Not to worry, B.S. —

Heaven is managed way, WAY better than the airlines will ever be. Thanks to Yeshua, qualified entrants will find an abundance of mansions (John 14:2) rather than overbooked seats, “because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matt. 7:14).

Now, please, contemplate the cartoonist’s intent as a glass half-full. Most readers seeing this comic are certain to react, “Heck no, I wouldn’t go to Hell for a hundred bucks,” right? Well, if you wouldn’t accept a \$100 travel voucher to spend an eternity in Hades, then why wouldn’t you *jump* at the offer of **free salvation through grace**? Frankly, B.S., this comic’s reverse psychology is so pro-Heaven that it could be deployed as a witnessing tool because it leads to an explanation (and appreciation) of the way to free salvation.

Satan, however, rather than straightforwardly offering a fixed sum to burn in hell, entices Believers away from our spiritual walk one centimeter at a time. Only once the gossamer threads of our sinful habits evolve into stout vines do we learn the true cost of Satan’s vouchers. —Mark

(continued next page)



Tangible Support

Dear brother Mark,

I praise God for the magnificent list of accomplishments for the Kingdom that you gave in the [January 2018 Personal Letter](#)! I have been blessed with your teachings down here in Rio, Brazil. Thank you also for the videos, songs, and marvelous Biblical lessons that you freely share with the world.

On the other side of my wall live the Kilkos — American missionaries who came to evangelize Jews in Rio de Janeiro. Before them, another American, Leonard Meznar, spent 40 years doing that.

I want to encourage you to keep up the good work, because you are blessing many.

Who knows what role Brazil will play in the Last Days; Muslim immigrants keep arriving and the evangelical community needs to learn what to do besides loving Israel, which we do in the face of our nation's vote at the UN.

I pray that you, your family, and ministry have a victorious 2018. Jerusalem belongs to Israel and to the Jews, and both belong to our Creator, the only God! —M.M. (BRA)

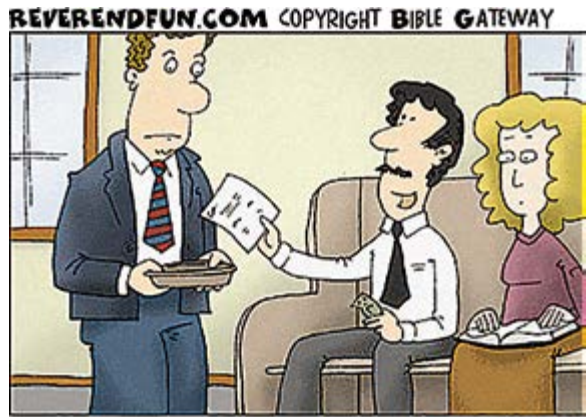
Dear M.M. —

Thank you for your heartfelt encouragement. Many of this ministry's readers and viewers will be pleasantly surprised to learn that Brazil is among the dozens of nations reached by *Zola Levitt Presents* and the *Levitt Letter*.

You kindly acknowledged my description of the ways in which this outreach spiritually nourished many multitudes throughout 2017 for free. You also mentioned the numerous *ZLP* episodes, Zola's music, and wonderful Bible teaching available to anyone, anywhere, anytime at no charge at [levitt.com](#). Our online, searchable library of Messianic Bible-teaching resources is open 24/7, and the price of admission is zero — so happy that you appreciate all that.

What your email didn't include, however, was any comment about how you might be supporting our efforts monetarily. So please allow me to offer a diplomatic yet direct response that I pray you will consider instructive, but one that you should disregard if you're financially distressed. We LOVE praise and moral support; rah-rah feedback is way more fun than nitpicking from members of what Zola called "the overcrowded Ministry of Rebuke." STILL, this ministry must receive *tangible* support. If only our TV broadcasters, newsletter printers, and the U.S. postmaster would accept letters of commendation as payment for their hefty invoices, I wouldn't need to ask you to please back your words with your wallet. — Mark

(continued next page)



I HAVE A GROUPON FOR BUY 5% TITHE AND GET 5% FREE



God Bless Your Work

Dear ZLM,

Tennessee Evangelist Perry Stone said that if you are getting agitation from 5%–10%, consider that you are on the right track; it's just the adversary trying to see how solid you are. Zola Levitt Ministries is very solid and has been since Zola Levitt began it.

Please accept the enclosed check. I always know that my contributions will go where they are needed most. Also, tell your staff to continue representing the LIGHT in a dark world. May God continue to bless you, as I continue to bless you. —G.W. (AZ)

Dear G.W. —

Thank you for your generous donation. We're only able to "represent the LIGHT/Yeshua" because of your financial support. You have an important role in keeping the word going out. —Kirsten and David



Multiplying Fruit in 2018

Dear ZLM staff,

It was a joy to see Zola's article "Our Marriage in Heaven" on the cover of the [January 2018 Levitt Letter](#). I could imagine his pleasant tone and the casual manner of his teaching that always made its point. My wife's and my health are improving, and we credit prayers (yours and others') for helping us get through this attack. In Yeshua's Name, may your ministry be blessed this year, and may the increase of your plans astound even the planners!

P.S. —The cartoons in the *Levitt Letter* are bright spots. I've always loved cartoons, even at my advanced age. P.T.R. (CA)

Dear P.T.R. —

We all miss Zola's voice and are committed to continue the outreach that he started many years ago. With great pleasure we reprint many of his articles so that new readers and viewers can understand the foundation on which his legacy was built. Blessings to you and your wife. —Tony

Jewish or Evangelical?

Dear ZLM,

It should not come as a surprise to you or your staff that there is a difference between Jewish teaching and Evangelical teaching. However, I have caught you on more than one occasion mixing up the two. *In re* the *Levitt Letter's* recent "Worship on Sunday instead of Saturday?" ([Classic Zola, January 2018, p. 11](#)), if you call yourselves a Jewish ministry promoting Jewish teaching, you should support the seventh day Sabbath as a day of worship and rest. Otherwise, call yourself an Evangelical ministry, and you can worship whenever you like. Now if you are intentionally blurring the lines, God help you. I

(continued next page)

am sorry to say that your answers given in this article are incorrect.

Your readers and I would like you to clearly state: This is the Jewish teaching and that is Evangelical teaching. Let the reader decide which teaching he wants to follow and stop misleading your readers. In Yeshua's name, F.M.

Dear F.M. —

Thank you for your letter regarding Jewish and Evangelical teachings. It would take too much space here to answer your objections to how Zola Levitt Ministries presents itself in the religious marketplace, so I will address the subject in the March edition of the *Personal Letter*. Please stay tuned! —Tony

Discerning the Law

Dear ZLM,

A dear friend gave me a copy of your January 2018 *Levitt Letter* in which I read Zola's "Worship on Sunday instead of Saturday?" (p. 11). I hope you will take the time to read the words of this prophesess concerning this subject.

Paul said in Romans 3:31: *Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.* Nothing Paul said was supposed to be construed to imply that we are no longer under The Law of God.

[Seven handwritten pages later]: Teaching people to desecrate the Sabbath is a serious offense. God said He would send some strong delusions to believe a lie and be damned because the love of the truth was not in them. I hope you are not in that position, too.

Most Sincerely, G.S. (NC)

Dear G.S. —

Thank you for your long dissertation on the Law, which we stopped seven pages short when your theology began to wander. If you'll get a copy of Tony's [October 2017 Personal Letter](#), you'll read about the New Testament's three distinct expressions of Law:

The Law of God expresses His mind and is binding on all God's sentient creation. This unchanging and never-canceled moral standard of God regulates the conduct of man.

The Law of Moses comprises the entire system of legislation (judicial and ceremonial) that God gave to Israel during their time in the wilderness. The Mosaic Law was binding on the Israelites, but not on the gentiles.

The Law of Christ is God's moral law expressed by Yeshua, our Mediator. It is the Law in His heart. As God's creation, we are still obligated to obey the moral Law of God; but as redeemed men and women, we belong to Yeshua, our Mediator.

So, yes, we agree that Believers are still subject to the immutable Law of God. — Editor ★



Coca-Cola and Passover

SCIENCE: BY ALINA DAIN SHARON (r) JNS.org



Yellow bottle caps on kosher Coke

Coke's Kosher History

In the 1930s, Rabbi Tobias Geffen of Atlanta began to investigate the hidden ingredients inside mass-produced foods to evaluate whether those ingredients conflicted with kosher laws. He then set a precedent by getting The Coca-Cola Company to make a kosher-for-Passover version of its soft drink, convincing the company to substitute the grain alcohol used in processing its drink to alcohol derived from molasses.

Geffen's achievement was a response to the fact that in the 1920s, when Coke became an incredibly popular beverage, Jews adopted a custom of making it available to children during the Passover seder in lieu of wine.

This step of compliance by Coca-Cola stood out at a time when few mainstream food manufacturers were making kosher-for-Passover products.

Coke was an enormous consumer product in the 1930s and jealously guarded its formula. Much of the company's decision, explains historian Roger Horowitz, rested on its confidence that Geffen would not reveal the drink's secret ingredients. The episode proved a valuable asset in persuading other conventional food firms to secure kosher certification.

Coca-Cola removed high fructose corn syrup from its Passover drink and replaced it with sugar (around 1989 or 1990), designating these bottles with distinct yellow caps.

The Orthodox Union and the World of New Food

The Orthodox Union's (OU) kashrut division certifies products as kosher and kosher for Passover (labeled "OUP").

"One of the staples of the kosher diet now is sushi. But there's a problem with sushi on Passover because sushi is made with rice" and Ashkenazi Jews don't eat rice on Passover, says Rabbi Moshe Elefant, Chief Operating Officer of the OU's kosher-certifying arm. How do you survive eight to nine days without sushi? You make it with quinoa. Quinoa was only in recent years certified as both kosher and kosher for Passover.

After many public requests for kosher quinoa, rabbis needed to make their decision based on ancient texts and rules that were written in an era when quinoa did not exist.

"We determined that quinoa is not part of the legume family; then we sent a rabbi to the mountains of Peru where quinoa is grown and packaged." He needed to see if the quinoa is processed on the same machinery as non-kosher

(continued next page)





for Passover products “that would, for lack of a better word, contaminate the quinoa,” Elefant explains.

As a result — and similarly to how kosher-for-Passover Coke is produced — about once a year, producers of kosher-for-Passover quinoa make a certain amount of quinoa specifically for Passover. It is labeled “OUP,” with full rabbinical supervision of the production process. Then the rabbis go home, and come back later for the next production round.

Today, many food ingredients and final food products are made far away from the grocery shelves, particularly in the Far East. Therefore, the OU has become a global operation, with a presence in 80 countries. In addition, the equipment used to manufacture food is all obviously new equipment that didn’t exist in the time of the Talmud. Contemporary rabbis need to be extremely knowledgeable about the machinery that manufactures food and in knowing how to conduct the koshering process without breaking “a piece of equipment that costs millions of dollars,” Elefant says.

Other Items Requiring Special Treatment

OIL — Corn oil cannot be used, so rabbis must figure out how to control the oil while it is being shipped in trucks across long distances to make sure the oil is not contaminated, washing and sealing tanks, putting in place control systems inside the factories.

CANNED TUNA — The fish is inherently kosher for Passover, but other ingredients like the vegetable broth that they sometimes put into the tuna are not necessarily kosher for Passover.

COFFEE — Coffee doesn’t require an OUP label to be considered kosher for Passover. Decaffeinated coffee, however, can only be consumed on Passover if the decaffeination process does not involve an alcohol made out of grains or corn.

ALUMINUM FOIL — Companies producing kosher-for-Passover foil have to use cleaning agents that are suitable for Passover. They manufacture a special run with an OUP label.



Dollars and Cents

Menachem Lubinsky, president of Lubicom Marketing Consulting (an agency working with kosher food producers), relates that Passover is the “most widely observed holiday on the Jewish calendar,” with an estimated 70% of all U.S. Jews attending at least one Passover seder. Lubinsky adds that the amount of OUP products consumed for Passover is enormous and “it’s good business” for companies to produce them.

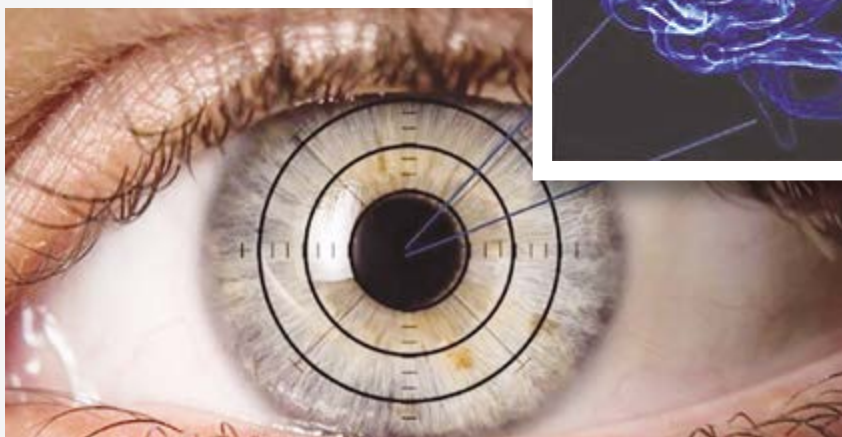
When Coca-Cola removed high fructose corn syrup, it did so in response to Passover consumers’ demand. But now, consumers are trying to avoid high fructose corn syrup for health reasons, prompting a growing number of food producers to remove it and substitute natural sugars or fruit sugars. This makes such products easier to certify as kosher for Passover.

In the end, says Elefant, “it boils down to dollars and cents.”

[Keeping kosher may not be required for the Believer’s walk with God, but sometimes it’s a healthier choice. See related information on p. 12.](#) ★

Eyes Divulge Early Signs Of Alzheimer's

MEDICINE: BY SHOSHANNA SOLOMON (r)
TimesOfIsrael.com



The eye as a window to our brain

Besides being windows to the soul, say researchers in Israel, the eyes could be a window to the brain. Israeli eye expert Dr. Yigal Rotenstreich, a retinal researcher, says his team at Ramat Gan's Sheba Medical Center are using advanced imaging techniques and a new medical device to track changes in pupil size that they hope could lead to the early detection of Alzheimer's disease.

The retina, with direct access to the brain, is easily accessible for noninvasive imaging and could potentially enable early detection of the disease even before clinical symptoms become apparent, the researchers believe. Alzheimer's is a type of dementia that causes memory, thought, and behavior problems. Symptoms usually develop gradually over a number of years.



Dr. Yigal Rotenstreich
of Israel's Sheba
Medical Center

The Sheba team includes Prof. Michal Beerl and Dr. Ramit Ravona-Springer from the Joseph Sagol Neuroscience Center. They use advanced noninvasive imaging techniques to determine the relationship between abnormalities in the retina, such as the volume and the size of its blood vessels and traces of beta-amyloid deposits, and changes in cognitive function and brain structure that are common in people known to be at risk for Alzheimer's. Beta-amyloid plaques are commonly found in the brains of Alzheimer's patients.

A combination of technologies — such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and optical coherence tomography (OCT) — takes 3D images of the eye to measure the parameters of the blood vessels, and a special camera-device, developed by the team, measures the amount of pupil constriction in reaction to various visual stimulations.

"We have developed a unique multi-focal device that measures the amount of

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pupil constriction when it is exposed to red or blue light. This allows us to test the adequate or inadequate functionality of the visual pathways in different locations of the retina,” Rotenstreich said.

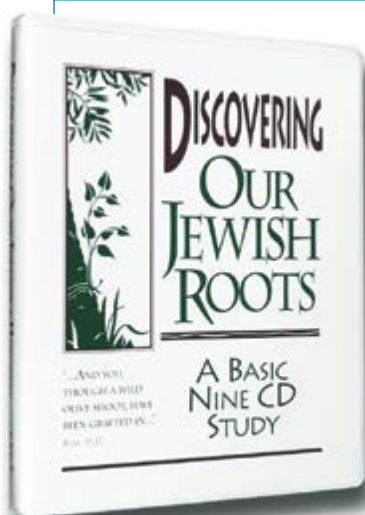
In preliminary studies using the new device, Rotenstreich’s team discovered that there were “aberrant pupil responses” to red and blue light, which suggested a loss of function of retinal neuronal cells in elderly patients who had a “very mild cognitive impairment,” Rotenstreich said.

The hospital now plans to tap into its registry of some 430 subjects (relatives of the hospital’s Alzheimer’s patients) to conduct a clinical trial to see if they can identify those same aberrant pupil responses and loss of retinal functionality among those who are at high risk of developing the disease.

Potential treatments for Alzheimer’s have consistently failed in clinical trials because parts of the brain were already overwhelmed by pathology. “The new set of tests we have developed are noninvasive, reliable, objective, and can be done repeatedly with a high reliability. If we are able to use these tests to find Alzheimer’s early on, then we will be able to use treatments earlier, hopefully with better efficacy,” Rotenstreich said.

If successful, the study, which has already enrolled 50 patients, “could lead to the identification of unique, treatable, noninvasive, low-cost bio-markers for preclinical Alzheimer’s disease,” Rotenstreich said. “And that would be a tremendous breakthrough.”

Rotenstreich established the Retinal Research Laboratory at Sheba Medical Center’s Goldschleger Eye Institute, where he and his staff conduct clinical studies aimed at developing new treatments and diagnostic tools to solve unmet needs in retinal and macular diseases. ★



Discovering Our Jewish Roots

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- Messiah in the Passover

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SELECT MEDIA BRIEFS

Small yellow and red “drop tomatoes”—about the size of a blueberry. Israel’s Kedma company says it’s the smallest in Israel, perhaps the world.

Tiniest Cherry Tomato

By Audrey Horowitz / AP.org

The “drop tomato,” about the size of a blueberry, was developed by the Kedma company in Israel’s southern Arava desert. It’s a point of pride in a country known for its agricultural innovation, where fruits and vegetables are taken seriously and where several strands of the cherry tomato were first invented.

Said Ariel Kidron, a Kedma grower, “You can throw it in a salad; you don’t need to cut it. It just explodes in your mouth.”

Kedma modified the seed, originally developed in Holland, to match the arid growing conditions in southern Israel.

An Israeli chef who owns three restaurants got some early samples and says the new strand is packed with flavor and will spawn an infinite number of new recipes. He offered it sizzled in a pan, baked into focaccia bread, and as a straight-up snack.



Drop tomato and dime-size Israeli one-shekel coin

In a blind taste test alongside two sweets, he said, “they would say the tomato is a candy, that’s for sure.”

I’ll look for these “candy tomatoes” next time we’re in Israel and report back. They sound delicious! —Kirsten



The card from Prince Harry and Meghan Markle

Mazel Tov to Prince Harry & Meghan

By Joseph Keith / YorkshireEveningPost.co.uk

Edna Levi, a member of the Jewish community in Leeds, England, was so “thrilled” by news of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle’s engagement that the octogenarian personally penned a note congratulating the royal couple.

She wrote: Dear Prince, I’m British-born but a member of the Jewish faith, and we say *Mazel Tov* on a happy occasion. This is why I am saying it to you and wishing you well and good health.”

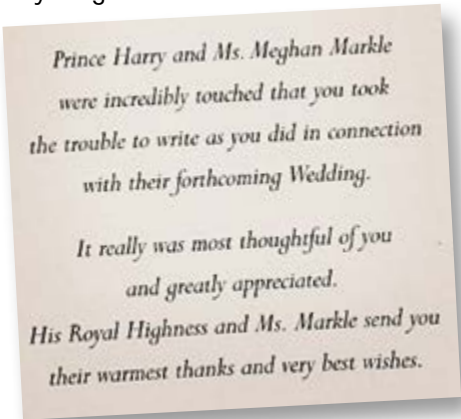
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She ended her letter with “shalom” (Hebrew for “peace”).

Then, a letter sent at the request of the Prince and Ms. Markle arrived. “When I saw it was marked ‘Buckingham Palace,’ I was absolutely amazed,” she admitted. “I didn’t think I would get a reply because they must get hundreds of letters sent, so I was thrilled. I’ve never written to the royal family before, but I like Prince Harry because of the way he looks after charities. He’s a nice, normal young man.”



The Hebrew Calendar

By Tal Barkay / YnetNews.com

Professor Eli Merzbach of Bar-Ilan University explains “there are many calendars in the world. Lunar calendars consider only the moon, like the Muslim calendar. Solar calendars consider only the Earth’s motion around the sun, like the civil Gregorian calendar. **Our Jewish Calendar is very special — a lunar-solar calendar,** which considers both the moon’s motion around the Earth, and the Earth’s motion around the sun.

“There are irregularities in the Jewish calendar, and these irregularities are occasionally balanced by adding a month. That’s what we call a leap year. A month is added seven times in a 19-year cycle.”

The Hebrew calendar, according to Prof. Merzbach, has existed for about



This year’s [Jewish Heritage Calendar](#)

1,600 years. “At one point, there was a dispute between the Land of Israel scholars and the Babylon scholars. It was about 1,200 years ago. The Jews marked Yom Kippur, Passover, and Sukkot two days apart, until Rabbi Sa’adia Gaon arranged the calendar as we know it today.” ★



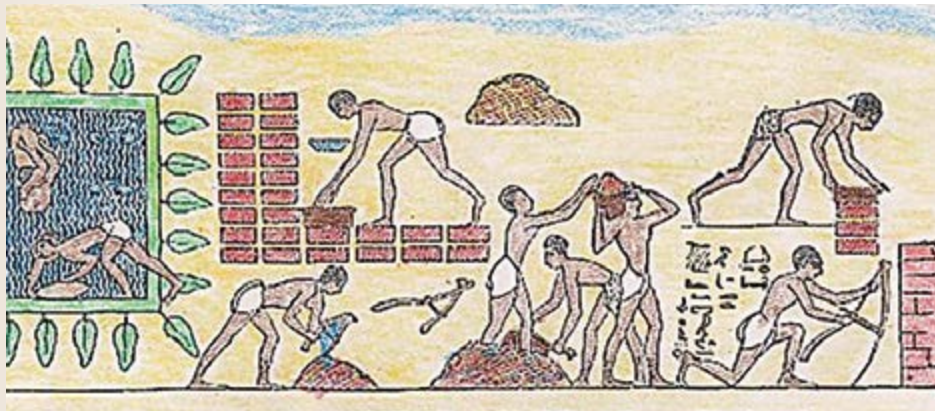
Dry Bones



Evidence of Israelite Slavery in Egypt



ARCHAEOLOGY: BY RABBI YISROEL ROLL (r) Aish.com



In a mural dated to the Israelite period, slaves build a structure in Egypt. Note the pile of mud bricks similar to the brick displayed on the table

The table of archaeological finds (to the right), according to Dr. John H. Taylor, curator of the Egypt Department of the British Museum in London, reveals a mud brick with straw that is stamped with a royal seal reading: "House of Ramses II." The mud brick, at the left end of the table, is one of twenty held in the vaults of the museum and not exhibited to the public. The brick has been carbon dated to the Israelite period of slavery in Egypt.



Table display of pyramid artifacts

Dr. Taylor states that the Israelites did not build the pyramids as is commonly thought; they were built 100 years after the Exodus. The Israelites built cities. Exodus 1:11–14: *So they appointed taskmasters over it [the Israelite nation] in order to afflict it with their burdens; it built storage cities for Pharaoh, Pithom and Ramses ...*

They embittered their lives with hard work, with mortar and with bricks. Further, in Exodus 5:10–11:

The taskmasters of the people and its foremen went out and spoke to the people, saying, "So said Pharaoh,

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photo: The Oriental Institute, The University of Chicago

Mud brick stamped with cartouche (inscription) of Ramses II





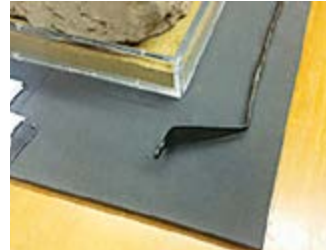
In the close-up photo of the brick above, one can see the straw and the seal which states, "House of Ramses II"

"I am not giving you straw. Go yourselves and take yourselves straw from whatever you find, for nothing will be reduced from your work."



The cobra head and wavy body shape of the 12-foot iron snake staff (pictured below right) found in a pyramid tomb provides evidence of Egyptian magicians'

staves mentioned in Exodus 7:11–12: *The magicians of Egypt ... each cast down his staff and they became snakes; and the staff of Aaron swallowed their staves.* The entire snake staff can be seen at the front of the table picture. When placed on the ground and manipulated by a magician, the staff can give the illusion of a snake. Egyptian magicians were known to be illusionists.



"Cobra head" of 12-foot iron snake staff found in a pyramid tomb



Wicker basket

The wicker basket (left, dated to the Egyptian period of the Israelites) gives evidence of the use of wicker baskets as recorded in Exodus 2:3: *She could not hide him [Moses] any longer, so she took a wicker basket and smeared it with clay and pitch; she placed the child into it and placed it among the reeds at the bank of the River [Nile].*

The copper mirrors on the right side of the table display show the existence of copper mirrors as mentioned in Exodus 38:8: *He [Moses] made the wash basin of copper and its base of copper, from the mirrors of the legions who massed at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting.*

The 11th-century French Bible commentator, Rashi, contends that Israelite women used these mirrors to beautify themselves in order to keep their husbands producing children despite the fear of bringing children into a life of slavery. This attests to the greater faith of the Israelite women than that exhibited by the Israelite men, which faith has continued to sustain Jewish continuity.

London educator and historian Rabbi Aryeh Forta organizes monthly private tours of the Jewish artifacts at the British Museum. Other remarkable pieces in the museum's private collection: a 3,500-year-old matzoh with finger imprints of the matzoh maker and silver wine bowls from the palace of King Ahasuerus, as mentioned in the Book of Esther. ★



Israel's Neighbors Very Dangerous for Christians

JEWISH NEWS SERVICE / JNS.org

Most of Israel's neighbors, including Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and the Palestinian territories, are among the most dangerous places in the world for Christians. According to a [2018 report by the Christian charity group Open Doors](#), Egyptian Christians suffer in "various ways" such as pressure on Christian converts to return to Islam, severe restrictions on building places of worship and congregating, and violence.

Egypt's embattled Christian minority, which makes up roughly 10% of the country's population, has been the frequent target of Islamic terrorism in the country in recent years. Suicide bombers struck Coptic churches in Alexandria and Tanta, killing 45 people on Palm Sunday 2017. A terror attack on a Coptic church south of Cairo killed eight Christians in December.

"Christians in Egypt face a barrage of discrimination and intimidation yet they refuse to give up their faith. It is hard for us ... to imagine being defined by our religion every single day in every sphere of life," Open Doors UK and Ireland CEO Lisa Pearce said.

"In Egypt, as in many other Middle Eastern countries, your religion is stated on your identity card," she added. "This makes discrimination and persecution easy — you are overlooked for jobs, planning permits are hard to obtain, and you are a target when you go to church."

Christian converts in Jordan face a great deal of persecution, as do Christians in the Palestinian territories (Gaza Strip and West Bank). For Syrian Christians, "Islamic militant groups are the clear threat," said Open Doors.

The report identified North Korea as the country where Christians face the highest level of discrimination, followed by Afghanistan and Somalia. Last year, more than 3,000 Christians worldwide were killed due to their faith.

Ranked among the top 10 most dangerous places for Christians: Libya, Iraq, Iran, and Yemen. "The Iranian regime defines Iran as an Islamic state based on Shia Islam. Christians and other minorities are seen as an unwelcome distraction from this plan," the report said.

Dry Bones



Egyptian Coptic Christian leaders, including Pope Tawadros II (center)

In our more than three decades of travel to Israel and Jordan, our groups have never felt threatened while touring Petra. Of course, Jordan's atmosphere differs from Israel's, but Petra's citizens are welcoming and gracious. Jordan's King Abdullah II has worked since 1999 to maintain a friendly relationship with Israel and with American tourists. — Tony ★



JEWISH HUMOR, ETC.



Reassuring Words

Pacing back and forth, Moshe Cohen was obviously anxious about his imminent operation.

"Why are you getting so worked up?" his wife asked him.

Moshe replied: "I heard one of the nurses say, 'It's a very simple operation. Don't worry, I'm sure you'll be all right.'"

"She was just trying to comfort you," his wife said. "Why is that so frightening?"

"She was talking to the surgeon!"

Hospital Advice

Two 5-year-old boys are in a hospital, lying on gurneys next to each other outside the operating room. The first boy leans over and asks, "What are you in here for?"

Boy #2 answers, "I'm getting my tonsils out. I'm a little nervous."

Boy #1 assures him, "You've got nothing to worry about. I had that done when I was three. They put you to sleep and when you wake up, they give you lots of Jello and ice cream. It's a breeze."

Boy #2 then asks, "What are you in here for?"

Boy #1 says, "A circumcision."

Boy #2 replies, "Whoa, good luck, buddy. I had that done when I was born, and I couldn't walk for a year." ★

*A cheerful heart is
good medicine —
Proverbs 17:22*



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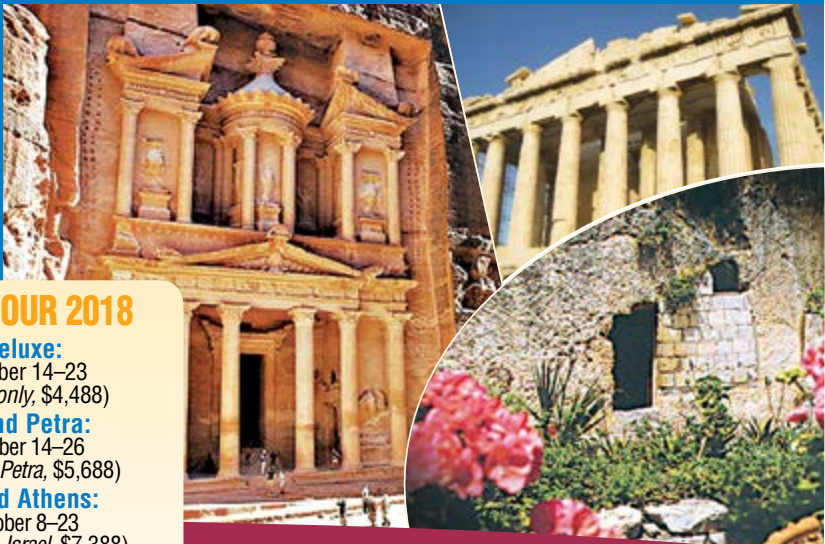


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