

The Passover

Regathering

the

Scattered

Exiles

Why celebrate Passover?

Because you are admonished to in I Cor. 5:7.

Does the possible existence of several hundred million descendants of Jacob, who are currently unaware of their identity, but who may in the near future return to the G-D of Israel, interest you. The concepts of the Exodus are familiar to almost any person who has read the Bible or heard its stories, yet for Christianity, the full impact of that Exodus freedom does not have the same meaning as it would to a Jewish person. Why? Because most Christians see themselves as being in a relationship with their G-D based on the faithfulness of the man named "Yeshua" and not because G-D made a promise to Abraham about his descendents.

The Jewish people have long looked to G-D's Torah as the standard of living required to live in a close relationship with each other and with the various nations that surround them. On the other hand Christianity has looked to their relationship with "Jesus" and the book about Him (N.T.) as a focus and prime authority for their belief system. The divergent authorities of both sides have kept Judaism and Christianity somewhat at odds for hundreds of years. Fortunately, the situation is rapidly changing. Thousands of individuals from both Jewish and Christian backgrounds are breaking from the traditional ignorances of both sides and are giving serious consideration to looking at the finer points of both sides.

Two of the points that they are considering are:

1. For the Jewish perspective, was Yeshua the "Messiah Ben Yoseph" and if so, what was the purpose of his coming?
2. And for the Christian and Jewish perspectives, is there enough evidence to support the belief in a current existence of and an eventual return of the so called "Lost Tribes of Israel?" Is so, who are they and where are they? Are they the Protestant arm of Christianity that for the

most part is pro Israel and that, in the past, fought Rome for the right to read the Bible for themselves?

Have you ever considered these questions for yourself?

Yeshua (Jesus) said, "I come not but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The "Sheep" currently living in Jerusalem at that time were, for the most part, of the tribe of Judah. He sent his disciple out into all the world to make disciples (Talmudim) out of those who would respond. It is interesting that he said "My sheep shall hear my voice" meaning that they would respond to G-D's Torah.

Ask yourself, why do I believe as I do and why did I choose to come to a Jewish Passover? Is it possible that when you look into a mirror, that you are seeing an assimilated descendant of Jacob? Is it possible that you, with what you knew, drew as close to G-D as possible? Will you draw closer as you learn more?

Want to know more? Look at I Kings 11 which records the division the Twelve Tribes into two distinct kingdoms or "houses." In the rest of the book of I Kings and throughout 2 Kings, read the detailed story of the entirely separate histories of what is called the "Divided Kingdom." The northern kingdom eventually turned to the worst sort of idolatry, and her kings abandoned completely the service of the L-RD and His Torah based Covenant with the people of Israel. The devastation of the northern kingdom of Israel came in a series of military campaigns by the Assyrians; primarily Sargon II in 722 BCE.

Are you to be a part of the regathering?

Bet Ami

Bet Ami is a service organization dedicated to bridging the gap between today's understanding of the Bible and the understanding with which it was written.

Through the study of ancient beliefs, idioms and history, we are attempting to make sense of the division between Judaism and what has now come to be know as Christianity.

We will not quibble over so-called "Theologies" because all theology is subject to interpretation. No man knows the mind of G-D as G-D knows Himself. Any attempt to formulate G-D'S beliefs and put them on paper as the absolute truth shows a great ignorance of the "greatness of G-D." All such attempts are mere philosophies. The only thing that mankind can exceed G-D in, is ignorance of the "Truth."

We respect the right of anyone to believe what ever they wish as long as their actions are commensurate with what is best for the whole community. We all have beliefs and realize, as we learn, our beliefs will be modified to accommodate that new knowledge. We understand that there are many interpretations and that none of the them are private; meaning that we don't hold much to today's brand of "revelation knowledge" where G-D speaks to some selected group and not another.

We seek to educate the Church and to become friends with the Jewish community. Still at that, the general consensus at Bet Ami is that Yeshua is the "Revelation" of the mind of G-D. We believe that Yeshua is the "Living Torah" and that He came to fulfill (explain) the Law. We believe, that as a Righteous Man, His death atoned for the sins of the World. We believe that He was Messiah Ben Joseph (the suffering Messiah who was to be killed by Rome) and Also will be Messiah Ben David who will overthrow Rome and all of the enemies of G-D.

**We believe that G-D, Himself, will
come to save His people.**

"The Chosen People"

The Jewish people can trace their existence back to a man named Abraham. He was a shepherd living in the area of Mesopotamia in about 2000 B.C.E. when he discovered that the practices of polytheism and idol worship were bankrupt. During his wanderings through the land, he adopted a belief in the One, all-powerful, all-encompassing, all-knowing, and invisible G-d. Abraham's faith stood in total opposition to the religious beliefs of his father and his father's countrymen. The relationship that Abraham had with his new G-D was unique in that an agreement was made with this G-D and Abraham that paralleled the agreements made typically with the kings of Mesopotamia. In other words, G-D met Abraham, while he was exiled from his father's land, and related to him in terms that he could understand.

This agreement or "Covenant" became binding on not only G-D and Abraham, but also on Abraham's descendants. Representing himself and his descendants, Abraham worshiped only the One true G-D and lived faithfully by keeping this G-D's laws. G-D tested Abraham on several occasions and because he proved to be basically faithful, G-D went on to re-affirm this covenant with his descendants, Isaac his son and Jacob his grandson. Abraham was loved by G-D because he was "faithful" to teach his descendants to worship the One G-D and live by his laws faithfully. In return for this teaching G-D promised, that He would continue to choose, cherish and keep Abraham and his descendants as a holy, "Chosen" people, a vehicle for spreading G-D's message and laws to the peoples of the earth.

"Faithful Messengers"

To be true and faithful messengers striving for perfection and to be living examples of G-D's law, Abraham's descendants were zealous in guarding their cultural and religious identity by remaining a separate people. The sign of this perpetual covenant would be the circumcision. This was a visible, physical reminder that these people were distinct from all others. To close the negotiations G-D promised Abraham and his descendants the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean as their home forever.

Abraham, his son Isaac, and his grandson Jacob dwelt in the "Promised land" and are known as the patriarchs, or fathers who laid down the basic tenets of the Jewish faith. A drought and a famine, however, forced Jacob's children to leave this land and settle in Egypt. As the generations passed, Egyptian leaders viewed the separateness of Jacob's descendants as a threat. The Pharaohs impoverished and enslaved the Israelites, as they were now called, for fear that they would join with Egypt's enemies to overthrow the kingdom. Unsuccessful in overworking and starving them out, the Pharaoh ordered the slaying of each newborn male Israelite.

As the story of the Exodus relates, one of the sons who escaped this mass slaughter grew up to lead the Israelites to freedom. Moses, placed in a basket to float down the Nile, was rescued by the pharaoh's sister, who raised him as her own. Later, discovering his real parentage, Moses left the royal palace, incurred pharaoh's wrath and fled to the desert. Here, as a result of his encounter with G-D, Moses became the instrument for liberating the Israelites and reviving the Covenant.

The Israelites' long sojourn in Egypt brought them into intimate contact with another culture and dimmed their own concept of being a holy nation. G-D took the Hebrews out of Egypt and into the desert. There He took the "Egypt" out of the people.

"The Suzerainty Covenant"

Up to chapter 19 in the book of Exodus, G-D had dealt with Israel by means of His unconditional covenant with Abraham. G-D began His relationship with Abraham by meeting him where he was. Abraham had come out of the Hittite culture and as such, was familiar with the form that the Hittite treaties took. G-D spoke to Abraham within the framework of those treaties to establish his covenant with him.

In (Ex. 19:5) we find G-D, from the mount, commanding Moses to say to the people "Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be My treasured possession although the whole earth is mine....." In connection with the covenant that He had made with Abraham there was nothing which Israel could "keep" (Ex.6:6-8) ; there were no conditions attached to it, no stipulations, no proviso's. It was unconditional so far as Abraham and his descendants were concerned. It was a covenant of pure grace. It is upon the basis of that grace covenant that G-D will again take up Israel.

The charter of the Siniatic covenant was the two tablets of stone, upon which were engraved the ten commandments, (Ex. 34:27, 28, Deu. 4:13). The terms of the covenant were agreed to (Ex. 19: 8; 24:3) Thus, the people, in a form, took an oath changing the "Grace" covenant into a "Parity" covenant. We read in Ex. 24:4-8, It was solemnly ratified by blood. In proposing any covenant G-D had two things before Him: the maintaining of His own rights, and the good of His People. Under the terms of this Parity, covenant G-D began to test these people to see if they would, or even could be "faithful to do all he commanded."

The covenants which are of greatest importance for O.T. history are those which regulate relationships between two distinct social or political units or international treaties. Evidence for the existence of such treaties goes back to the third millennium B.C.E. in Sumerian sources, and to Old Akkadian texts two centuries later. By far the

most useful and extensive body of material comes from the Hittite Empire of the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1400-1200 B.C.E.), which had far-flung relations from Mesopotamia to Egypt, as well as suzerainty over various city-states of Northern Syria.

The Hittite suzerainty treaties have been preserved in abundance, and can be used as an illustration of the highly developed form, to which they had evolved throughout the ancient Near East. These covenants were the formal basis of the Empire; it was upon them that the relationship between the Hittite state, and the vassals which owed it allegiance, depended. They placed the vassal state under the protection of the Hittites, and at the same time placed the military resources of the vassal state at the disposal of the suzerain. There can be little doubt that the military alliance so formed was a primary intent of the treaties, but in addition, they were a means of preserving the peace within the Empire by regulating in advance the obligations of the vassal. Since it was the suzerain who stipulated the obligations of the vassal, the latter was, in effect, protected from arbitrary action on the part of the vastly more powerful overlord.

The form of these treaties has been carefully analyzed, and the following characteristic elements of a treaty in this period may be isolated.

a. The preamble. The treaty text frequently opens with the statement: "These are the words of . . .," followed by the identification of the king who gives the treaty, his titles, appellatives, and genealogy. The treaty is thus a message from the suzerain to the vassal.

b. The historical prologue. This consists of a description of the previous relationships between the two parties. frequently in the "I-Thou" form of address, emphasizing particularly the acts of benevolence which the suzerain has performed for the good of the vassal. Often it is actually the vassal power which placed the Hittite king on his throne. These preceding acts of the suzerain are evidently regarded as the foundation of

the vassal's obligation, and therefore the historical prologue seems to be carefully composed; these prologues are actually the most important sources for the history of the Hittite Empire.

c. The stipulations. This section contains the obligations to which the vassal binds himself in accepting the covenant, defined by the suzerain. The content varies widely, but military obligations are as expected, treated in detail. First, the vassal must not enter into alliances with other independent kings, and he must be a friend to the suzerain's friends, and an enemy to his enemies. The vassal must answer any summons for military forces, and engage wholeheartedly in any military campaign commanded by the suzerain. Secondly, regulations for the treatment of refugees are so frequent that it is necessary to conclude that this was an important issue during this period. Thirdly, war booty is often regulated in advance; this also was evidently a fertile source of discord. In addition to these most common stipulations, many other types of actions are prescribed or prohibited. Most interesting is the frequent prohibition of "murmuring," the utterance of "unfriendly words," against the suzerain, and the obligation to report such words uttered by others. With this is often combined an exhortation to trust the suzerain, even in spite of appearances to the contrary. Finally, a stipulated tribute is imposed.

d. The deposit and public reading. Typically there is a provision for the deposit of the treaty document in the sanctuary of the vassal, and a requirement that it be read in public at stipulated intervals, from one to four times a year.

e. The list of witnesses. Ancient legal documents normally ended with a list of witnesses, and the international treaties are no exception. Here however, the gods of both are named. In fact, some of the lists seem to attempt exhaustiveness in making all known gods of the cultural area witnesses to the covenant. In addition, however, important features of the natural world are included, such as mountains, rivers, springs, the great sea, heaven and earth, winds and clouds. It seems reasonably certain that the gods as witnesses were expected to punish breach of contract, and thus religious awe was appealed to as a ground for future obedience. Though the Hittite king certainly did act against a rebellious vassal with military force, the treaties mention only religious sanctions.

f. The blessings and curses. This consists of a list of goods and calamities which the divine witnesses were called

upon to bring upon the vassal for obedience and disobedience respectively. The curses usually precede, and consist of the misfortunes usually attributed to the wrath of the gods in antiquity; destruction, sterility, misery, poverty, plague, famine. The blessings, conversely, are divine protection, continuity of the vassal's blood line, health, prosperity, and peace.

If the Hittite treaty form is used as the model by which the OT covenant is analyzed, the following features of the narratives about the period of Moses fall into place.

a. The preamble. These are words of Suzerainty with Title Genealogy message to vassals (Ex. 20). "I Am the Lord your GOD". No further identification of this Suzerain is necessary or possible.

b. The historical prologue. A description of previous relations- particularly acts of benevolence. A review of historic events. Like all other parts of the Decalogue, it is extremely brief in comparison with the Hittite treaties, but it has the essentials. The phrase "who brought you out of Egypt" is inseparable grammatically from the identification of the covenant giver. This revelation of GOD by Himself, is inseparable from those historical events which became the foundation of the covenant itself.

c. The stipulations. Obligations to which the vassal binds himself, the interests of the suzerain, which the vassal is bound to protect. These begin with the very same obligations that are so frequently written in the Hittite treaties.

1. The forbidding of relationships with other sovereign powers. Since a deity with whom one has no relationship is unreal and irrelevant (in contrast to a mighty ruler of an empire on one's borders), the beginning of monotheism is to be found here.

2. One must be a friend to the suzerainty's friends and an enemy to His enemies. This exclusive relation to a single god carried with it the obligation to engage in and refrain from war at his command. Little is known for certain of the means by which those commands were communicated, but human "charismatic" leadership certainly had much to do with it. Failure to wage war was breach of covenant among the Hittite vassals, and

the same is repeatedly stated or implied in the early narratives (Num.14; Judg. 5; 21:5).

3. Numerous regulations for treatment of refugees.

4. Booty settled ahead of time.

5. Unwavering trust in the suzerain was also mandatory, and murmuring against him was always regarded as violation of obligation. The murmurings in the wilderness were punished, but the murmurings which precede the Sinai covenant in the texts are not. Evil talk has continuously been regarded as criminal.

6. Tribute is imposed. The offerings - obedience took precedence over other concerns

The stipulations define the interests of the suzerain which the vassal is bound to protect, and to a considerable extent have to do with regulations which preserve the peace within the domain of the suzerain. By placing the people under oath to refrain from the acts prescribed by these stipulations, there is a horror in the community of the sort of acts which are precisely those most likely to disrupt the peace. Murder, theft, adultery, false oaths, accusation, insubordination of children, and religious schism are certainly among the most common sources of internal conflict. Except for Sabbath observance, the content of the Decalogue was not so different from the customary law of the pagan nations of antiquity. It was the religious conception of GOD and the relation of man to GOD in the covenant that sharply distinguished Israel from ancient pagan peoples; above all, it was the fact that obedience to the commands of GOD took precedence over other concerns, by making temporal blessing and calamity dependent upon ethical or moral norms, which law had to serve, not create.

d. The provision for deposit of the written covenant and its periodic public reading is found repeatedly, though in the later sources. Deu. 10:5 states that the tablets of stone were placed in the Ark of the Covenant, as does the Priestly source in EX.40:20. Since the ark was certainly a portable sanctuary, this tradition is exactly in keeping

with customary procedure in pre-Mosaic times. The provision for public reading of the stipulations is preserved in one form in Deut. 31:10-11, but there are frequent references to the public recitation both of historical traditions and of the "laws" (Deut. 26:1-11; 27; 31:9-13, 22; Josh 4:6-7; 8:30-35; private, family recitation is especially emphasized also in Deut. 6:20-25 and elsewhere).

e. The list of witnesses, so characteristic of Hittite treaties and necessary for binding legal documents in ancient law, could not have a parallel in the exclusive covenant between YHWH and Israel, unless from New Testament theology, you understand that the Father bears witness with the Son.

f. The Blessings and Cursings appear in such variety that little need be said of this as a part of the Israelite covenant traditions. The lists of Deut. 27-28 are most detailed, but it is not only in the pentateuch that the

blessings and **cursings** appear.

Divine protection

Destruction

Continuity of Line

Sterility

Health

Misery

Prosperity

Poverty

Peace

Plague/Famine

***Temporal blessing and calamity were dependent on moral norms.**

g. The Oath Itself is missing in the covenant with Israel until late in the Exodus writing.

1. **Suzerainty.** In suzerainty covenants, a superior binds an inferior to obligations defined by the superior. Some prior inducement is necessary before the one in superior power is willing to give up his freedom of action in a covenant relationship. Though suzerainty treaties bound only the one inferior in power, the superior nevertheless gave up some degree of freedom of action. His relationship to the vassal was not based on force alone, once a covenant had been established; he had stipulated what he required of the vassal, and further arbitrary exercise of his superior power was not expected of him.

2. Parity. In parity covenants both parties are bound by oath. So far as the validity of the covenant is concerned, it seems clear that the oath was binding only upon the one who swore, therefore the death of the vassal and accession of his heir required the drawing up a new covenant. The same was true evidently in the case of the suzerain. Its true of course, that the terms of a previous treaty were generally respected by a new king of a vassal state.

Under the terms of a Parity Covenant, the king was obligated to deal severely with any infraction of the covenant. This discipline was to be carried out, even to the death since a sworn oath had been taken on the part of both parties. So binding on both parties were these covenants that most even obligated the descendants of those who swore the oath. In fact, the covenant continued for as long as the king lived.

Conclusion: For those bound under the Suzerainty covenant, the laws remained the same except that the king could extend grace to his vassals when an infraction occurred. The terms of a Suzerainty covenant were preferred so as to take advantage of the "loving kindness" of the king but if it was ever transformed over to a Parity covenant, it was impossible to revert back to the grace covenant without the demise of the king.

Most Jewish people today do not believe that Yeshua was the Messiah. Why? Because peace was not established thus bringing peace and safety to the Jewish peoples of this world. On the other hand, some of the Jewish scholars will conceded the possibility of this "Jesus" being the Messiah Ben Joseph, the suffering servant, as espoused in the Talmud. Even this does not clarify what it was that he did when he came.

He was a righteous man, so under the terms of the law, his life atoned for the sins of "the Nation." Also, He was pronounced "King of the Jews" and He died on the tree thus opening the way to revert to the Grace covenant. At his return, He will be the "King Eternal."

"The Old Testament"

Has the New Testament replaced the Old? The first Century believers accepted the Scriptures as the authentic revelation of G-D. It was the basis for their beliefs, the final authority. For example, when the Apostle Paul preached to people in the city of Berea, "they received the message with the great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. Acts 17

What did prominent men of G-D at that time use as their authority? Acts 17:2-3 tells us: "As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead.

Yeshua himself set the same example in using the Scriptures as the basis for his teaching, by repeatedly saying: "it is written." He thus interpreted to them things pertaining to himself in all the Scriptures Matt. 4:4-7. Yeshua, Paul, and the first century believers all used the Scriptures as the foundation for their teaching.

What were the Scriptures that they were using? It certainly was not the New Testament because it had not even been formulated at that time. So where has this idea come from that "the New Testament has replaced the Old," or "the Old Testament must at least be interpreted in light of the New? This type of thinking has led many into some erroneous thought processes. Its basis is anti-semitic. Remember, while Yeshua and Paul stand out as the two primary authorities of the New Testament, they both held the Torah (Old Testament) to be their authority.

The New Testament is comprised of a history of the life of Yeshua, some letters to newly established gentile congregations and at least one apocalyptic book for telling the doom of the Temple. It was much later in history before the various books were ever assembled and placed into the form that we now call the New Testament. Should we not also look to the Scriptures as Yeshua and the Bereans did?

Why is Hebrew Important ?

Hebrew is a holy language. Literally, it is a system of twenty-two letter used to assemble the language of Torah. G-D used Hebrew to convey His will and His ways to Moses and to those who followed Moses. G-D arranged the Hebrew letters in such a way as to convey meaning concerning His laws and His insights.

Scientists teach us that all matter is comprised of the special arrangement of molecules. In the same way, the sages teach us that the individual Hebrew letters have special powers of their own. In fact, their arrangement gives us insight into the relationship between seemingly different words and concepts.

How is this done? Each Hebrew letter has a numerical value placed upon it. Thus the numerical value of each word can be computed by adding up the numerical values of each Hebrew letter in the word. This science, the study of numerical values for each Hebrew word, is called **gematria**. The conclusion is that words or even phrases that have the same numerical total have a kinship.

How is that going to help you if you don't know Hebrew? Those conversant only with English will still be able to recognize immediately the relationships of many of the word groupings. Why? Because, **some** fundamental truths, spiritual meanings and philosophical ideas can still be shared between peoples of differing languages.

It may appear to be a game to note that two totally different words, when translated onto the language of numbers share the same total and hence a relationship but here is an example:

The Hebrew word for Child (yld) has a total value of 44.
The Hebrew word for Father (av) has a total value of 3.
The Hebrew word for mother (em) has a total value of 41.
 $3 + 41 = 44$

Conclusion: It is not simply man and woman, sperm and egg, that have merged; it is also the essence of their G-DLY ideal that is powerful in the act of creation.

How should the Biblical text be studied?

It should be studied in it's original text as much as possible. If you can only study the text in it's original, one word at a time, you will be much better off than not doing it at all. Why? Because each language has it's own peculiar nuances and idioms that seldom, if ever, conveyed exact meaning into another language.

The Hebrew word "shalom" means hello, good-bye and "it is paid." You can see instantly that this might be problematic in translating a text. For instance, what was it that Yeshua yelled from the Cross? The Greek text tells us that he yelled, "it is paid." But since He was a Jew He probably spoke Hebrew which means He could have meant any of the above interpretations. Now I believe that the Greek translation used at this place in the text is correct, but I wanted you to see the possibility for error. I doubt that He was shouting "hello" because it would not make too much sense that He was greeting newcomers as approached. He could has been saying "good-bye" to family and friends because of his impending demise, but I choose to believe that He was indicating that with His death, certain issues between G-D and mankind were being canceled.

There is one more meaning for "shalom." It means "peace." Those who teach Torah indicate that it is to be analyzed on the basis of four different methods of commentary. They are:

1. (peshat) the simple or literal meaning.
2. (remez) alluding to or remembering back.
3. (derush) inference or typical application..
4. (sod) secrets or hidden meanings or messages.

The first letters of the four approaches combine to form an acrostic (Pardes) which means orchard or garden. To study Torah properly is to be placed back into the realm of "the garden of Eden." Knowing this, is it possible that in some way, He was indicating all of the above at once?

"Hello" - from G-D. "Peace" - to you now.

"The debt is paid" - your sin is gone. "Good-bye" - I'll be back.

"Peshat" - The simple meaning

Any time you read the Biblical text to only comprehend it's stories and glean from it principals for higher living, then you are involved in "peshat." Studying the Biblical text in this manner is to study it on it's most elementary level, yet many of those who consider themselves to be devout followers of G-D never even approach this level of Bible study.

Now they may be able to quote many passages from the text, yet very seldom can they place those scriptures in proper context. In fact the quotes are almost treated like cliches in that they have almost become trite and commonplace. Often, they are removed from their practical meaning and stated completely out of context. Sometimes quotes are given that aren't even in The Biblical text, such as "G-D takes care of those who take care of themselves."

Another thing that so called "religious" people do is make justifying statement such as "I follow the Ten Commandments," yet when pressed to list them, there are very few that they can recite. Historically I have found people like to memorize non threatening quotes. Seldom do they cherish self condemning passages but somehow they always know one that applies to someone else.

So how should one be involved in the peshat type of Bible study.

1. Read the text just as you would any good novel or historical book.
2. Get into the stories and involve yourself with the characters.
3. Identify with the stories and see yourself in their situations. *do not let the time gap lead you to think that there is no relevance for today just because the stories seem antiquated.
4. Learn from the mistakes of the characters and let their stories lead you into learning from your own mistakes.
5. Be objective, open minded, not subjective, close minded.

"Remez" - a reference back to something

Looking back, or remembering plus the concept of allegory. A pure parable differs from a pure allegory in two respects.

1. It is simple and credible in itself
2. It begins by saying that A is like B.

The parables in the Gospels are of this sort. There are, however, some parables which tell a tale simple and credible in itself but do not begin by saying A is like B, but rather leave the hearer wondering. At times, the allegory will deliberately mislead, like the parable that Nathan told David when he took another man's wife. The "Song of the Vineyard" in Isaiah 5:1-6 is also very allegorical.

There are two principal kinds of allegory in the Bible. The first occurs when the narrative is based upon an image that suggest the intended subject. In Ezekiel, 16, Jerusalem appears as an adulteress and in Ezekiel 23 the two adulterous sister, Oholah and Oholibah, represent Samaria and Jerusalem. Also in Ezekiel 19 there is a twin allegory, in which the lioness and the vine stock symbolize the people of Israel.

The second kind of allegory occurs when the literary composition has a complete meaning contained within itself, independently of the moral or spiritual framework that lies beyond it. There is perhaps one that stands out in the Bible, namely the Song of Songs.

Now to complete the concept of "remez," we can see how, by using certain key words or phrases, that a person can be directed back to something previously known. By calling himself "the Bread of Life or Heaven," he points back to the manna experience. By employing that Israel is a flock of sheep, we are remezed back to Moses who was the shepherd of both literal sheep and the people led out of exile. Another remez is "garden." The cross, being made of a tree, is a tree which bore fruit, in the midst of a garden. The double remez is to the "Garden" where Adam and Eve partook of death and also to the brazen serpent on the pole.

Derash - Preaching

The sermon, delivered in the synagogue or in "the house of study," as it is known, mainly on Sabbaths and festivals, is a very ancient institution. Nothing is known of its exact beginnings but it may have originated in the translation of the Scripture into another language for the benefit of those who could not follow the Hebrew reading. What is well known is that by the end of the Second Temple period, sermons were a well-established custom both in Judea and in the Diaspora.

Preaching was the chief means of instructing all the less scholarly of the people such as the peasants, women and children. It gave to all an elementary knowledge of the Torah and its teachings but it also provided the sages with a means of guiding the people, strengthening their faith, and refuting erroneous views.

By using the various methods of interpretation, the preachers succeeded in making the Bible an unceasing source of ever-new meaning and inspiration in which answers to the problems of every generation could be found.

Through the bold use of the Biblical material, the sages were able to give expression to the burning issues of their own times, and to enhance the application of ancient traditions to new circumstances. In addition to the use of interpretation, the preachers would amplify and recreate stories, and would enliven their preaching by the use of folk tales and parables. Thus the rabbis succeeded in keeping the Bible alive and meaningful for their generation.

The two forms of preaching that Yeshua used the most were allegorical and parabolic teaching. Although parables were supposed to make the Scriptures clear, Yeshua used some parables that confounded his listeners. The confusion came from their inability to relate to certain concepts because of non-familiarity with the existing text.

Sod - Mystical

This is the viewing of the processes of the world or Scripture in a manner that relates them to G-D and His hiddenness. "Mysteries" or "mysteries of the faith" are terms that are alluded to in the New Testament. Some of the concepts in Paul's writings, in the book of John and in the book of Revelation are considered to be mystical in nature. Their mystery lies in the fact that they are symbolic and can only be understood by those who know the codes.

Since the Torah was considered to be essentially composed of letters that were nothing less than configurations of the divine light, and since it was agreed that it assumed different forms in the celestial and terrestrial worlds, the question arose of how it would appear in the future age.

It was agreed upon that "Had it not been for Adam's sin, the Torah's letters would have combined to form a completely different narrative. It is believed, therefore, that in the world to come, G-D will reveal a new combination of letters that will yield an entirely new meaning. Thus, since all things are created by the alphabet of Torah, in its new form, all of creation will take on a new form. " There will be a New Jerusalem that comes down from Heaven." This implies that through the revision of Torah, the ancient city will take on an entirely new appearance. In the same way, man will no longer have the tendency to sin because, who he is, will be different.

Although simplistic in concept, it would be like rewriting a novel to alter the outcome of the story. Sound too far fetched? Remember, what ever G-D thinks becomes reality when He speaks it into existence.

"The Righteous Gentile"

The 613 were given to the Hebrew peoples and were not applicable to the Gentiles as such, but a proselyte was required to keep the seven basic laws of morality called the

"Noahide laws."

The seven main categories are as follows:

- 1. Prohibition of idol-worship**
- 2. Prohibition of blasphemy**
- 3. Prohibition of theft**
- 4. Prohibition of murder**
- 5. Prohibition of sexual misconduct**
- 6. Prohibition of eating meat cut from a living animal**
- 7. Prohibition of failing to set up law-courts**

**These seven laws cannot be found listed in the Biblical Text as a group, nor can the term "Noahide laws." They can only be found scattered here and there in the New Testament especially in the book of Acts. They can be found listed in Talmud, which is the commentary on Mishnah, which was the oral form of Law that was accepted by Yeshua and even referred to by him. It was the "hope" of Judaism that the whole world would come under the rule of the "seven laws."*

The sojourning proselyte was not required to be circumcised in order to operate in the existing Jewish economy. By the adoption of the Seven laws of Noah, a Gentile was considered to be "circumcised of the heart."

The next step in the conversion process of a Gentile becoming a Jew was to become a full convert (ger tzadik). This involved circumcision and embracing of the 613 Laws and the making of a sacrifice. If a ger tashov wanted to make a sacrifice, he would have to find a priest who would take his sacrifice from "the court of the Gentiles into the area where the altar was because a Gentile could not enter

the "men's court" unless he was a full convert. This person remained a convert until his third generation. If his offspring and children of his offspring remained loyal to Judaism, then he was considered (through adoption) to be a full "Child of the covenant."

*** So, in a sense, all those who call themselves Christians are involved in "Messianic Judaism" whether they know it or not.**

As mentioned before, "Christianity" was a derogatory term given to the Ma' aminim (Believers = Christaloi). From the onset, it was a very Jewish thing. "Christianity" was a term given by the Romans who resented the replacement of their Poly-Theistic beliefs by the Mono-Theistic beliefs of those who were turning from Greek philosophy to a belief in the One G-D of the Jews. Today, because of the created rift, Christianity has moved very far from being what it had originally started out to be. Most of Christianity believes that the Jews must convert to the Christian way of thinking to enter the "World to come." Originally it was just the other way around. It was not until the fourth century that the "Church" to the West had moved so far from a study of Judaism that it lost all contact with the roots that supported the original.

Some of the problems that occurred between the Jews and the Gentiles were from the development of wrong premises and misinterpretations of Scripture. As those who developed the text, who knew the true meanings of words, who understood the idioms that were contemporary with the Torah and who had the Hebrew way of thinking were no longer involved in the teaching, paganism crept into the church to the west. The problems still plague us even to this day.

The New Testament

Yeshua's many references to scriptures were from the Torah of the Jews. At times, He would make references to "it is written," which was an allusion to the written law, and at other times, He would state "you have heard that it was said," which referred to the Mishnah, the "Oral Torah." Yeshua wrote no book: He taught by word of mouth and personal example. But some of His followers taught in writing as well as orally. Often, indeed, their writing was a second-best substitute for the spoken word. In Galatians 4:20, for example, Paul wishes that he could be with his convert friends in Galatia and speak to them directly so that they could catch his tone of voice as well as his actual words but, as he could not visit them just then, a letter had to suffice.

Torah is the word that is translated "Law" in the English translations today. Doing away with the first five books of the Bible would be the result of doing away with the law. The anti-Christ is portrayed as being lawless because he no longer believes that the law is valid. Paul is not the anti-Christ because he said the law is good. Yeshua was spoken of as being the "end" of the law. End can also mean goal as well as termination point. Yeshua himself stated that "not one jot or tittle of the law should be passed away until heaven and earth passed away.

A careful look at the books in what makes up the cannon of the New Testament will indicate that the books were being written to Jewish "Converts," explaining and correcting their belief systems, rather than to Jews who already knew these things. Sometimes, lay people are shocked to find out that the disciples did not use the New Testament because it wasn't even developed until about the middle of the second century.

***Marcion is the first person known to us who published a fixed collection of what we should call New Testament books.**

Others may have done so before him; if so, we have no knowledge of them. He rejected the Torah as having no relevance or authority for Christians; his collection was therefore designed to be a complete Bible minus the Torah. Does this make Marcion and all who believe like him the anti-Christ?

Marcion was born about AD 100 at Sinope, a seaport on the Black Sea coast of Asia Minor. His father was a leader in the church of that city, and Marcion was brought up in the apostolic faith. ●f all the apostles, the one who appealed to him most strongly was Paul, to whom he became passionately devoted, concluding ultimately that he was the only apostle who preserved the teaching of Yeshua in its purity. Paul's refusal to allow any element of law-keeping in the message of salvation to the Gentiles was taken by Marcion to imply not only that the Torah had been superseded by the gospels, but that the gospels were an entirely new teaching brought to earth by Messiah.

At first the Roman churchmen were so disturbed by his doctrine that they not only rejected it, but even returned a large sum of money that he had presented to the church. He distinguished the G-D of the Old Testament from the G-D of the New. This distinction of two deities, each with his independent existence, betrayed the influence of gnosticism in Marcion's thought.

Marcion is not to be singled out as being the only blame for the rift that occurred between the Hebrew Church to the east and the Greek church to the west. He is only one example of the type of Anti-Semitic thinking that drove the wedge deeper and deeper between the two groups. Paul's letters were written to prevent this very thing from happening, but because of the miss-understanding of what he meant, or the purposeful twisting of what he said, the thinking of both groups went in different directions.

Constantine and his Ideas

Constantine was probably the one who did the most to alter "Christianity."

He brought it to the place where it was now something almost entirely different from the original. He adopted the Yeshua movement of the Righteous Proselytes that were in his jurisdiction because he needed their stability and support to help him prop up the sagging Roman empire. When he did so, those that were still poly-theists were outraged because they were being forced to fall under the new, so-called Catholic religion of Rome. To ease some of the transition, Constantine changed the Sabbath to Sunday, did away with the Jewish feasts, adopted the existing holidays of the pagans and allowed the concept of Trinity. Some of the fathers rebelled against the celebration of the winter solstice (Christmas), the celebration of the Queen of Babylon, Ishtar (Easter) and Trinity, and for a while, called them heresies. The meanings of these holidays were now said to commemorate the birth of Messiah and His death and resurrection. Thus, through persistence and ignorance of what had preceded, they came into common acceptance.

About this same time, those who had rejected the idea that Yeshua was the Messiah, now elected to follow a self-proclaimed messiah called Bar Kokvah who was determined to overthrow Rome. Since the followers of the Nazarene could not in good conscience side with his messiahship, they refused to help and the Bar Kokvah rebellion came to a resounding defeat.

Those Jews that were involved in the rebellion

moved to the place of Javnah and began to develop a strategy for survival since the Temple had now been destroyed. The Jewish believers kept to themselves and because of the hatred between the two sects of Judaism, were permanently separated. Thus, we now have the three great divisions of Messianic Judaism.

The Gentile Church to the west divided in about the year 1050 into the Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox churches.

The Jewish Church to the East was totally wiped out by the Arabian invasion of the territory that was known as the Roman empire, and the School of Javnah went on to become the Rabbinic Judaism of today. It is out of this group that the Ultra Orthodox group has been formed who consider themselves to be Messianic Jews; those who look forward to the coming of Messiah.

Today, some of those denominations that were formed after the reformation of Martin Luther now are forming "Messianic" congregations. They basically retain the doctrines of their denominations, but have readopted some of the Jewish appearances. For the most part, they still have the attitude of the Western church; that Jews must now convert and believe that Jesus was the Messiah in order to get saved.

Note: Some converts fall in love with the idea of judaism rather than with the "ideals" of the Torah.

"A prayer shawl does not a Jew make."

"G-D Fearers"

"In the last days, ten Gentiles will take hold of the tallis of a Jew and say take me to your G-D."

On the other hand groups of "G-D Fearers" are now appearing on the scene. They are congregations of Jewish and Gentile believers in the One G-D of Abraham. Within these groups, there are congregations that believe that Jesus was only a man. Some believe that He was the Messiah, and only a man, while others believe that He was a manifestation of G-D on the earth.

But whatever their belief, they are returning to the concept that the law has not been done away with. They are also returning to the seven High Holy days that G-D said should last forever. They are even returning to observance of Shabbat from sundown Friday night to sundown Saturday night which is the way that Judaism has always done it since the separation that occurred between it and Christianity. They are returning to the G-D of Abraham, and becoming children of Abraham, which is what the book of Romans teaches that a Gentile convert should do.

They are all comprised of believers who, for whatever reason, have left their denominational churches and are now beginning to question for themselves how the Bible should be understood as to the Law, Sabbath, and their positions with respect to the Jewish people. They are coming to the conclusion that while they were looking for the infamous anti-Christ, they had overlooked their own positions.

"Exile"

When Adam and his wife refused to be grateful for what G-D had given them to eat in the garden and instead, wanted that which was forbidden, G-d caused them to be cast into two exiles. The first was into a world where G-D was hidden and where thorns and weeds competed for their very existence. The results of the thorns and weeds is obvious, but the "hiddenness of G-D is not. Where G-D is hidden, the choices that man has to make are not so obvious. To make the correct decisions, man needs two things. The first is G-D'S view point (Torah) but that alone is not enough. Correct interpretation requires the presence of G-D'S Holy Spirit in the same way that G-D met with Moses (Face to face as a friend) when He gave him instruction concerning Torah.

The second exile was into death where they experienced utter helplessness and total loss of control. Since then, all of Adam's children have followed their father in experiencing the most dreaded of exiles, that being death. When a man dies, his spirit is torn away from its host body that acted as a servant, doing its every bidding. The man is also totally removed from family, friends, business, wealth and anything else that could comfort him. The only One who can retrieve him at this point is the G-D of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. G-D told Abraham that his children would go into exile (Deu. 4) but He also indicated that in the last days He would bring back those who were hopelessly lost. All of this is pre-figured by the Passover story where the children of Jacob were hopelessly enslaved because of the slavery that they sold their brother Joseph into.

"Freedom"

Every individual should feel as though he or she had actually been enslaved and redeemed from Egypt. The story of the Exodus is familiar to all of us, but we need to understand it in terms of our own lives and our own times. We need to see, that "freedom from enslavement" and the concept of being redeemed, are timeless and should not be changed. But as these concepts are told in other times and places, their true meanings will have to be related in terms that the "stranger" can understand. Keeping the integrity of concept, while altering the language, is very problematic. This is why we at Bet Ami look at the Torah through a Jewish perspective.

A basic look at historical information will show that Easter was not celebrated by the "Church" until very late in it's history. The concept of celebrating Easter, rather than Passover, was done to appease the pagans that were forced to accept "Christianity" under the direction of Constantine. Still today, the record of what should be done is permanently recorded in I Cor. 5:7-8, where it is explained that the Messiah is our "Passover Tamid" (substitute) and emphatically warns us to celebrate the "Feast." As you will see later in this Seder, verse 8 even tells us to search out the leaven in our own lives and to partake of the unleavened bread of the feast

Fact:

Early Christianity was a sect of Judaism until somewhere around the beginning of the fourth century. It was at that time that a forced rift occurred between Judaism and the so called "Western Church."

**Search this out yourself as you would leaven.
If you do not know how, seek help,
but find out for yourself.**

"Freedom from What?"

When pondering what it is that we should be free of, the concept of the exile should always be central to our way of thinking. Exile is always the result of some wrong doing yet that very exile is a part of the cure. To understand this, we must first understand the concept of adultery. One of the definitions of adultery is the joining together of things that should not be joined. Another aspect of adultery is the taking of something that does not belong to you and using it for your own purposes.

Adam and Eve joined themselves to a foreign concept proposed by the serpent. As a result of their thought processes deviating from the norm established by G-D, they were encouraged within themselves to take that which G-d had reserved for Himself alone. In their hearts, they had begun the process of spiritual adultery by emotionally joining themselves to another. Then, by having the fruit, they joined themselves to it by consuming it, so in a sense, they and the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil became one.

All wrapped up in this whole idea of adultery, is the notion of faithfulness. Although G-D was faithful to Adam and Eve, they were not faithful to Him. G-D could have killed them for their transgressions, yet He chose to be merciful and only send them into exile where they could experience first hand the consequences of their sin. The exile is a curse yet that curse is the thing intended to drive the exiled back to G-D spiritually.

Self imposed spiritual exile precedes G-D imposed physical exile. Teshuva or return to G-D is done spiritually before it can be done on a physical level. Being in the presence of the Lord requires spiritual fidelity or faithfulness (faith), for it is written, "one cannot please G-D without faithfulness or faith. **Note: When reading the N.T., "faith" should be more often read "faithfulness."**

"The Leaven"

A formal search for leaven is conducted on the night before *Pesah* (Passover). This is the final removal of leaven from the home as stated in Ex. 12:19 and Ex. 13:7. It is traditionally carried out by the light of a candle, with a feather and a wooden spoon to collect the *Hametz* (leaven). Why a candle, a feather and a wooden spoon rather than a lamp, a broom and a dust pan? Because those are for major cleaning and all of that should have been done before the detailed search for small uncleanness. A candle is used for close-up work and a feather and spoon would cause us to pay attention to the small details.

The leaven is kept until morning and then it is taken out and burned. The searching and the burning are allegories of things to come. The hametz (the less appetizing qualities of our people) is to remain in the house over night. But when the morning of redemption comes, those qualities will be cast into the fire and completely consumed. Then the words of Isaiah will be fulfilled: "He will swallow up death forever. Adonai will wipe away the tears from all faces and he will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth . . ." (Isa, 25:8).

Passover focuses our attention on food. In ancient times, Passover called upon the Israelites to slaughter sheep, grind grain for flour, bake matzah, gather herbs, etc. At least once in our lifetime we should involve ourselves with food on its most basic level. We should go off into the woods with only some grain. The experience of having to find wild herbs for flavor and grinding the grain with rocks and then heating those stones to bake the matzah would convey to us the basic understanding of how important it is to have food not only for our bodies but also for our souls.

If we "sincerely" attempt to conquer our own evil inclination and to cleanse our hearts of sin, (hametz), we need not brood or wallow in guilt if our attempts are not entirely successful.

"Spiritual leaven"

What do we mean by spiritual leaven? The process of removing leaven from the home is meant to arouse us to remove those negative inclinations within us as well. We take a candle to search for the leaven the night before Passover. The biblical text indicates that "the soul of a man is the lamp of the Lord, searching all the innermost parts" (Proverbs 20:27) Into the darkest recesses we carry a light, (our conscience) searching for that which is hidden deep within each of us. Just as we are to remove and burn leaven, we are to look at our attitudes in the light of a repentant heart, and remove and judge those which are found to be lacking. We might think one time of repentance would suffice, but our inclination to do evil will not disappear so easily. Just as leaven requires many attempts to eradicate it, so too will the Yetzer ha-ra (evil inclination).

It is very important to find the most minute amount of leaven, because its presence can begin the process of effecting the status of what ever it contaminates. Similarly, no matter how small or deeply hidden the evil inclination is within us, it will fester and grow and eventually poison everything else. around it. Since the search for leaven must be extensive and intensive, the search for the smallest particle of wrong thinking must be thorough.

Jews are prohibited from eating or even owning hametz during the eight days of Pesah. So why are they allowed to eat and own it for the remainder of the year? Both man and G-D get angry, jealous and hurt. When man experiences these feelings, his mental attitude changes and often he is compelled to retaliate in a way that is harmful to others. When these feeling become overwhelming, they have a tendency to control the man. The difference between fallen man and G-D is, G-D controls His anger, jealousy and hurt and is not controlled by it.

**When man under the influence of Torah is
able to subdue this evil and control it:
To him, it is no longer sin.**

"The Table"

Every table you sit at should be viewed as an altar. The altar was a place of fellowship and it was a place where atonement was made, meaning that peace was secured between G-D and man. Many times, an offering was taken to the altar because of conflicts between man and man. In today's fast paced society, little thought is given to the significance of meal time. Too often, we come to the table to satisfy only our physical hunger, when in reality we should come to the table to sustain ourselves and others. With a little study and consideration, the table in the home could become a place of healing and fellowship for both families and community.

We have an abundance of food today in America and yet many people are still starving. The reason is, that they are starved for love, attention, and meaningful physical contact. To some, food has become the drug of choice and is used to cover the pain of hurt and cravings.

The ancient Hebrews focused on the act of eating as being one of the major forms of communion with G-D. The substitute sacrifice was taken to the entrance of the "Tent of Meeting" or the Temple, where hands were laid on the head of the "innocent." A confession of wrong doing was made and the taking of it's life was completed. There lives were exchanged as one died for the guilt of the other.

The slain victim was disassembled while a search was made for corruption. Then the sacrifice was roasted and returned to the one who brought it to be carried back home and consumed. Everyone who took part in the meal was considered Holy because the sacrifice was Holy. Kadosh is the Hebrew word for Holy. It is translated in the N.T. as Sanctified.

Thus the whole family was put at peace with G-D by the death of the innocent sacrifice and they were also sustained physically by consuming its roasted body. It went through the fire of judgement for them, was consumed and became part of them.

How did the table become an altar?

Occupied by Rome, Judea was administered solely for the benefit of its conqueror. Few of the overseers and other officials understood or respected the Jewish moral and religious influence prevalent there. Judea was a country, seething with political discontent, conflicting ideologies, religious disputes and economic hardships. This was definitely a time of great difficulty for deeply religious men.

While some were preparing for open rebellion against Rome (Zealots) others were buying their way into priestly power and influence (Saducees). In the desert, those in the Qumran community were advocating total separation because of the corruption of the Priesthood while still another group counseled the Jews to look within themselves and turn back to G-D and His laws. This last group was called the Pharisees.

One of these men was an itinerant carpenter's son from Galilee named Joshua (Yeshua), the son of Joseph. In his wanderings he saw his people suffering and believed their salvation would come when they turned fully to G-D, repented of their sins, and stressed love in their lives rather than hate.

This Yeshua also knew, along with the rest of Pharisees, that the Temple was soon to be destroyed. In fact, the Pharisees had been stressing this fact for some time before Yeshua came upon the scene. Faced with the dilemma of how to function when the altar would no longer be available for proper sacrifice, they developed a concept where by the daily offering would be moved into the home where the heart of Judaism already was.

We can see that Yeshua was teaching this at the time of Passover, when he held up the bread and the wine (this was the poor man's sacrifice as given in Deu.) proclaiming it to be "his body and blood." **Note: This was the typical proclamation exclaimed when a Jewish person brought a sacrifice to the Temple site.**

"The Preparation"

The Seder table should be attractively set. Spring flowers are appropriate. At least one set of candlesticks, Kiddush cups, the Passover plate, the Unity bag, a pitcher of water, a basin, a towel, salt water, and a decanter of wine are all a must. In addition, a large wine cup for Elijah should be placed in the center of the table.

The Ceremonial Seder Plate should contain the following:

1. A charred shank bone of lamb (Z'roa).
2. A roasted egg (Baytzah).
3. Bitter herbs (Maror).
4. Greens such as parsley (Karpas).
5. A mixture of nuts, apples, cinnamon and wine (Haroset).

* To accelerate the distribution, duplicate "ceremonial plates" may be placed around the table. If possible, each person at the table should be provided with a Kiddush cup, a small dish of salt water, and a small dish of Maror and Haroset.

Sufficient wine should be provided so that each participant may partake of four cups. If many guests are present, several decanters should be conveniently placed so as to expedite the filling of the four cups. If there are those who can not have alcohol, for religious or other reasons, be mindful to provide grape juice.

Traditionally, the host or the leader wears a white robe known as a Kittel. The white robe is a reminder of the vestment worn on sacred occasions by the priests in the ancient Temple. White is a symbol of festivity, gladness, and freedom and is appropriately worn during the Seder.

On the left side of the host's armchair, two pillows are placed for "leaning" while reciting certain parts of the service. Music is also a vital part of the Seder service. Wherever possible, Hebrew passages should be chanted rather than merely read.

"The Lights"

The practice of kindling lights at the beginning of Shabbat is first mentioned in post biblical literature. By the time of its completion, at the end of the second century C.E., the Mishnah assumes that Shabbat begins with the kindling of lights and it goes into detail about the proper kind of wicks to be used for the oil lamps of that time.

In later times, when the oil lamp was replaced by candles, it became customary to have a minimum of two lights for Shabbat. These two candles correspond to the two different words, zachor/remember and shamor/observe that begin the Shabbat commandment in the two versions of the Ten commandments (Ex. 20:8 and Deu. 5:12).

The lighting of candles mark the formal beginning of Shabbat. The candles are not lit any later than sunset. Under the Jewish code of law, both men and women are obligated to light Shabbat candles. Thus if there are no women present in the home or a male is traveling alone, he is responsible for lighting the Shabbat candles. Despite this ruling of equal obligation for the candles, the lighting of the candles became a mitzvah closely associated with women. This probably happened because of the traditional Shabbat schedule, according to which, men would be at the synagogue welcoming Shabbat, while women were in the home prior to sunset when the time for candle lighting arrived.

It is customary for those who light the candles to cover their eyes or use their hands to block the candles from view while saying the blessing.

The blessing:

Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai E-lo-hei-nu, me-lech ha-o-lam, a-sher ki-de-sha-nu be-mits-vo-tav, ve-tsi-va-nu le-had-lik neir shel Sha-bat.

Praised are You, Adonai or G-D, King of the universe who has sanctified our lives through His commandments, commanding us to kindle the festival lights.

Why we recline

Why do we recline as we celebrate Passover?

For several reasons. Resting on pillows means that we are at ease, without fear, secure and content. And Who is it that gives us that feeling of security? It is none other than the One who freed us from the calamities of life. The Great G-D of the Biblical text.

Being at ease or at "rest" is that status which is promised to those who wait upon the L-rd. In this rest we are free to learn, to comprehend and even have nostalgic memories of past events that brought us to this hour. We are at rest to enjoy the tastes, the sounds and the smells of Passover. Rest is a place that G-D hollowed out of time for us to dwell in safety, just as Moses was secure in the "cleft of the Rock."

Within each man there are two natures. One being the "inclination" to do good. The other, to "incline" towards evil. At Passover, we bring both inclinations into subjugation to the "L-rd of the Feast." Yes, even our inclination to do evil must be brought into the arena of being grateful to G-D. Some have thought that the evil within us should be totally eradicated, but we were created by G-D with both capacities. This is what makes us so unique among the living things of the world. We learn by the failures of our lives. We also learn by the successes brought on by doing good. One who is totally evil is one who is totally "selfish." One who is totally "selfless" can be defined as "having no thought or regard for oneself." Both of these are extremes and as such, are impossible. A certain amount of "selfishness" (love of self) is necessary for survival. Our G-D loves Himself and He also loves us. He is the perfect balance of love for self and for others. We should attempt to imitate that balance in our lives.

Remember:

We are to recline while we drink the wine of joy, the wine of gratitude, the wine of contentment and the wine of peace.

The First Cup

The first cup is called the "Cup of Sanctification." We begin the service by sanctifying the name of G-D and proclaiming the Holiness of this Festival. With a blessing over the wine, the Jewish people usher in the Sabbath and all other festivals. As we lift this cup, the symbol of Joy, we will welcome in the Festival of Passover. As we partake of this cup of wine, we acknowledge our Creator, our Father and our Liberator.

Yeshua offered a blessing to "The Father" and then He joined His disciples in consuming the cup according to the traditions of His time. We also are his disciples (students) and as such, we are admonished to recall G-D'S promise of ultimate redemption, the people Israel.

This "ultimate redemption" is pictured in the Exodus from Egypt. The yearly remembrance of the Exodus continually spans the years like a bridge over time and keeps us connected to that great event when G-D led His people out of bondage through "signs and miracles." The concept of Israel as the Chosen People is not true because it is an article of faith; it is an article of faith because it is true.

Why is wine used a symbol of sanctification when it so readily brings to mind revelry and intoxication? How can it be a symbol of liberation when so many have become enslaved to it? All things were created by G-D and thus they are good. No object is intrinsically good or intrinsically bad. Its nature is determined by the way we use or misuse it.

The blessing:

Ba-ruch a-ta A-do-nai E-lo-hei-nu, me-lech-ha-o-lam, bo-rei pe-ri ha-ga-fen.

We praise you, Adonai, our G-D. Ruler of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

Clean Hands

Abrahamic belief is a very practical system. We are commanded to wash our hands so that they are physically clean. This helps prevent the spread of germs and viruses that constantly plague us. But it also has a deeper meaning in that the hands are those parts of our bodies that we use to serve both G-D and others. Our hands become polluted when they come into contact with filth. When our hands are used to do wrong, they become polluted in a sense and need cleansing. We are cleansed from our acts of sin by "Atonement," but there is an aspect of cleansing that we must accomplish. That is done through our conscience effort to avoid doing wrong which pollutes us and also by confessing when we recognize that we have done wrong.

So the concept of washing is more than simple removal of contamination. It is the realization that what we do with our hands can pollute our lives and the lives of others. This whole concept teaches us about "differentiating." The Torah teaches us to make distinctions. We are bidden by understanding to distinguish between G-D and idols, between true and false prophets, between pure and impure, between good and evil, between sacred and profane; in total, between that which conforms to G-D and that which does not conform to Him. Our destiny and our very survival, depends on whether we make the right distinctions.

How do we cleanse our hands? Using a pitcher or a cup, pour water over each hand. Why are "washing instructions" pertinent? Because this is an act of ritual cleansing. The priests in the Tabernacle and Temple all washed their hands and feet at the Laver. At the Seder, all the participants may wash their hands, or the leader may do so on their behalf before distributing Karpas.

One for all: This is an interesting concept to sit and think about. It is written; "A righteous man can atone for the sins of a nation. How about a world or a creation?"

Greens

In olden days, banquets were started with such appetizers. The custom was preserved, in order to make children ask questions, and also as a sign of freedom because slaves were not accustomed to such luxuries.

The dipping of the food is a further sign of comfort and indulgence. Yet we dip it into saltwater, to remind us of the bitterness of bondage. Why not do the same thing when we eat a salad before dinner? Sometimes we take things for granted while never asking why.

The only requirement at Passover is that the Karpas be a green vegetable like celery, parsley, endive, water cress, chervil or scallion. But in harsh times, such things as potatoes, radishes are used instead of parsley. The fact is that vegetables are the only food that Biblical Law allows to be eaten alive. We never give much thought to it, but all of these foods can be planted and expected to take root. Only when they are cooked, do they lose their life. Here again is a great example of one living thing giving up its life to sustain another.

The green vegetable is a symbol of springtime and the miracle of nature's renewal. At this season when the earth arrays itself in fresh growth, the spirit of man also rises, and he renews his faith in a world where freedom and justice will prevail. It is no wonder that life springs forth because it is at this time that the greatest of the two lights that G-D placed in His heaven begins to retake its exalted position. The ancients believed that the light that preceded the Sun and Moon was the light of the Messiah. There are numerous commentaries that discuss "new life" and the prosperity that will abound on the face of the earth when the light of the Messiah takes its exalted position.

Blessing:

**Ba-ruh at-ta A-do-nai el-o-he-nu me-leh ha- o- lam,
bo-rai p-ri ha- a-dam-ah.**

**Praise be to the L-rd G-D, King of the universe,
Creator of the fruit of the Earth.**

Salt and Water

Salt and water are two of the most common elements on earth, yet in certain parts of the world they are very scarce. Both salt and water are absolutely necessary for maintaining life, so when they are not readily available, existence for most life forms is threatened.

There is a bowl of salt-water on the table, to represent the tears that the Israelites shed in Egypt. It is used for dipping the karpas, and also for the egg for those who are accustomed to concluding the meal proper by eating the egg after it is immersed in the mixture of salt and water.

Salt is essential to the health of men and animals. Table salt, is used universally as a seasoning, and thus makes things palatable. Covenants were ordinarily made over a sacrificial meal, in which salt was a necessary element. The preservative qualities of salt made it a peculiarly fitting symbol of an enduring treaty, sealing it with an obligation to "fidelity." The word salt thus acquired connotations of high esteem and honor in ancient languages. In English, the "salt of the earth" describes a person held in high esteem.

Water covers a very large portion of the earth's surface. It is absolutely essential for life, for the average human cannot go longer than seven days without water. Water is one of nature's dichotomies. Water is used to quench fire, and yet it is comprised of the two elements' hydrogen and oxygen which are both very volatile. The fluid during pregnancy is very similar to sea water.

Salt comes from the earth and water comes from Heaven in the form of rain. Tears are comprised of salt and water and it is stated in the Talmud, that G-D counts the tears of women. When salt-water evaporates, the salt remains with the earth from whence it came and the water returns to the heavens in an evaporated form. In the same way, G-D returns our bodies to the earth at death and our "Spirits" evaporate back to Him.

The Matzah

The unleavened bread, eaten during the eight days of Pesah, is made from flour and water, kneaded hastily and baked quickly in order to prevent all fermentation. The separate cakes known as matzoth are perforated to keep them from rising in the baking and then put, one at a time into the oven.

Matzah is the bread of those who are in a state of stress and hardship, who cannot wait long for sustaining aid. The Matzah symbolizes the haste with which the people of Israel had to leave Egypt. It reminds us of the poverty and affliction of our forefathers while under the yoke of tyrants. The offering of leaven on the altar was forbidden, so the unleavened bread alludes to brokenness of heart, this being essential to bringing a sacrifice. In opposition, the fermenting of leaven is a symbol of decay.

The Matzah shemurah (guarded matzah) is specially prepared from wheat watched from the moment of harvesting so that no moisture touches it; every process must be under the strict supervision of observant Jews.

Some well meaning groups today hold up a piece of matzah and display that it is both pierced and striped and by this they allude to the fact that Yeshua was both pierced and striped (afflicted) for us. All of this makes a great story, but that is all that it is. This is as a result of the machinery used to bake the matzah today and it really has very little resemblance to the matzah of Yeshua's day. He was pierced, wrapped like the Afikomen, hastily placed in the oven of Hell (a grave), was brought forth and was not left there to decay.

Yeshua broke bread and proclaimed:

Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai E-lo-hei-nu, me-lech ha-o-lam, ha-mo-tsi le-chem min ha-a-retz

We praise You, Adonai our G-D, Ruler of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

*(fill second cup at this time, but do not drink)

The Unity

Three whole matzot are placed on the Seder-plate or in a "Unity bag." But on all other Sabbaths and festivals, each meal opens with a blessing made over two loaves of bread, which represent the Manna that miraculously fell in the parched wilderness and fed the Children of Israel during their forty years of wanderings. It was forbidden to gather Manna on Shabbat, but two portions fell the day before, hence the two loaves.

The leader takes up the unity bag and displays the fact that it has three compartments. In each compartment is one matzah. The two exterior matzot are left undisturbed, for tonight we focus on the central matzah. This extra matzah commemorates the Exodus from Egypt and is called the "bread of poverty."

Yeshua broke bread and indicated that the same thing would happen to Him. To the Jewish people, bread and wine were the focus of their existence because it was primarily from these two that they were sustained. Yeshua was not implying that the bread literally became His body as some have reasoned: the idea was greater than that. He taught, as bread and wine sustain the people of G-D, what He was about to do was to sustain the many who had understanding. Much symbolism is portrayed in the comparison of Torah and bread. Yeshua indicated that the Torah was His bread. He also alluded to being the "Living Torah" (Word) and the bread of "Life" (affliction).

A great deal is said about the three Matzot representing the Father, Son and Spirit. The Jewish people have never believed in the Trinity as a doctrine. The problem being that Trinity is taught as three "separate" persons by some Christian organizations. They do however believe that there are multiple aspects to G-D. The Sh'ma declares "our G-D is One," not three. The Trinitarian concept was not accepted until early 4th Century when all of the "Jews" had been expunged from the Western Church. 1st and 2nd Cent. teachers call the idea heresy.

The Afikomen

The Afikomen is one of the most mysterious of all the elements of Passover. The extra matzah, the middle one, early in the service is broken in two, for the "poor" are accustomed to breaking their bread and sharing it. Half of this middle matzah is hidden away by wrapping it in a white linen cloth. The other half is used for the special blessing over bread (matzah) just before the meal starts.

The broken piece of matzah that was hidden away early in the ceremony is known as the "Afikomen." The word is often connected with a Greek term meaning something to do with after meal entertainment or dessert. When the Temple was destroyed and the Paschal sacrifice was no longer brought, the piece of matzah known as the Afikomen, which is eaten as a symbolic reminder of the sacrifice, also came to be eaten at the end of the meal so that no food should follow it: the taste should linger. Care is also taken to eat the Afikomen before midnight, as was required of the Paschal lamb.

Among some communities it has become the custom for children to "steal" the Afikomen from its hiding place, and then demand a ransom for its return. The ransom could not be demanded until after the meal when the Afikomen was needed. The ransom was to be paid with silver which in Biblical symbolism referred to redemption.

The Shulchan Aruch which is the Code of Jewish law states that the Afikomen takes the place of the lamb. It has been stated by Prof. David Daube, a non-messianic Jew of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, that "this practice originated in the seders of Messianic Jews in the first century C.E. and is in reference to the Messiah who was "bruised for our iniquity", "broken" for us, but hidden from our people by their traditions."

**This word is not Hebrew but a Greek verb
meaning "I CAME"**

*(2nd Aorist tense form the Greek verb "ikneomai").

The Four Questions

It is the custom for the youngest child to ask the four questions. Actually, the Talmud stated that "anyone can ask them, even a scholar at the table of scholars, or, since the questions are somewhat rhetorical, a lone person celebrating a Seder might ask himself."

In Temple times there were only three questions; they referred to matzah, dipping twice and the roasting of the Pesah offering. After the destruction of the Temple, a question about maror was substituted for the question dealing with sacrifices. The question about reclining was added at a later date.

The questions:

1. On all other nights we may eat hametz and matzah: on this night only matzah.
2. On all other nights we may eat all kinds of vegetables: on this night we must eat bitter herbs.
3. On all other nights we do not dip even once: on this night we dip twice.
4. On all other nights we may eat either sitting up straight or reclining: on this night we all recline.

* A rather cynical modern Hebrew poet was of the opinion that there were far more important and relevant questions that should be asked on Passover; A Haggadah printed in 1938:

1. Why is so much blood now being shed in the world?
2. Why do people all over the world hate Jews?
3. When will the people of Israel return to this land?
4. When will our country be a fertile and luxuriant garden?

Answers to questions:

"We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt." If G-D had not delivered our ancestors "with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm," we would still be slaves. That is why this night is different.

The Four Sons

The Torah speaks of four types of children:

The wise son asks,

"What is the meaning of the laws, regulations and ordinances which the L-rd our G-D has commanded you? To him you shall explain all the laws of Passover even to the last detail.

The rebellious son asks,

What does this service mean to you? By using the expression "to you" it is evident that this service has no significance for him. He has thus excluded himself from his people and denied G-D: therefore, give him a stern answer and say "it is because of what the L-rd did for "me" when I came out of Egypt." "For me," not for him, for had he been there in Egypt, he would not have deserved to be liberated.

The simple son asks,

"What does this mean?" Tell him, "With a mighty hand, the L-rd brought us out of the house of bondage."

The son who does not know how to ask,

begin by explaining, as we are told: "You shall tell your son on that day, I do this because of what the L-rd did for me when I came our of Egypt."

It is not enough to be free in body; one must be free also in mind. Jews have frequently been threatened with both kinds of slavery. The slavery imposed from without, which destroys physically, and the self-imposed slavery which destroyed spiritually those who turned from G-D.

* Because the pronoun "you" in the verse, "You shall tell your son" is *aht*, feminine, it has been interpreted that it is the mother who shall impart the first instruction to the child.

The Story

In early times, our ancestors worshipped idols, but the Holy One, blessed be He , has brought us near to worship Him, as it is written: "long ago, your fathers lived beyond the river and they worshiped other gods. So I took your father, Abraham, from beyond the river, and I led him throughout all the land of Canaan. And I multiplied his seed, and I gave Isaac unto him in his old age. And I gave Jacob and Esau unto Isaac. And Jacob, whose name I changed to Israel, I led down to Egypt with his sons through a famine.

Thus the Holy One premeditated the end, to do just as he said to Abraham our father in the Covenant which he declared: "Know this for sure, that your seed will be strangers in a land not theirs, and they shall be slaves, and shall be tormented for four hundred years. But the nation whom they serve, I shall judge. Afterward, they will go free with great wealth."

Pharaoh said to his people: "Behold, the children of Israel are too many and too mighty for us! Let us reconsider their position before they multiply and grow far more powerful. Should a war come, it may very well be that they will join our enemies and flee from the country."

So it was decreed that all Hebrews be carefully watched. All their newborn sons were to be thrown into the river so that the nation might not reproduce itself, and all adults were to become servants of the state. The Israelites became slaves, toiling long hours in the fields, gathering straw and making bricks to build the great monuments and pyramids of Pharaohs.

But one Hebrew baby was preserved through G-D'S mercy, hidden by his mother among the reeds of the river. Pharaoh's daughter found the child when she went to the river to bathe. She loved him and decided to raise him as her own son so she called him Moses. He grew into

(continued)

The story continues . . . even today.

manhood under the protective custody of the oppressor himself. As he grew, so did his sympathy for his suffering people. Eventually he was forced to flee Egypt because he had come to the aid of a suffering Israelite, and in so doing killed an Egyptian. For forty years he lived in the desert as a shepherd, unaware that the All-seeing, blessed be He, was preparing him to be the shepherd of His people, Israel.

It is written: "The children of Israel sighed because of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry ascended up unto G-D. And He heard their groaning, and remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob." And G-D spoke unto Moses from the midst of a bush which burned but would not be consumed. The Lord said unto Moses: "Come now, therefore, and I will send you unto Pharaoh, and you shall say "the Lord G-D of Israel has commanded; "Let my people go that they may serve their G-D."

Again and again Moses requested that Pharaoh allow the Israelites to depart from Egypt so they might worship the Lord, their G-D. Pharaoh refused to listen, saying; "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I don't know this Lord, nor will I let Israel go."

It is written: "Pharaoh shall not listen to you, so I will multiply my signs and my wonders, and I will lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring out my people from the land of Egypt by My great judgements. Then the Egyptians shall know that I AM the Lord, when I stretch forth my hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them."

*(Lift the second cup and proclaim in unison)

This is what The L-rd has said!

The Second Cup

Part one

The second cup is to be filled after the blessing over the matzah and just before the four questions are asked. It is not until this part of the Seder that the second cup is addressed. This cup is to be raised in praise to our G-D during the reading of "The Story" and then returned to the table without drinking.

Why? Because we cannot truly rejoice at the demise of any of G-D'S creations. This cup is called the cup of "Praise." The next step in the Seder is to remember the plagues that G-D brought against the Egyptians to make know His power and might over the "false gods" of the Egyptians. As we remember the plagues and list them one by one we are admonished to remove a drop of wine for each plague as it is named.

*(At this time, look to the next page).

Part two

By not celebrating the punishment of another, we remove ourselves from the Seat of Judgement. Who of us can sit in judgement on another? The last plague of death was to fall on the first born of the Hebrews as well as the Egyptians. It was only because G-D saw the blood of the Egyptian god (the lamb) that he ordered to be slain, that He had mercy. If the Egyptians had not questioned the power of the Hebrew G-D and had been obedient to the Word of the Lord and taken the life of the lamb, then their first born would have also survived that terrible night.

Blessed be the name of the L-rd our G-D, who created the Fruit of the vine.

Blessed be those who understand that wine which brings us joy comes from the crushing of the fruit of the vine.

(Proceed to "The Sandwich")

The Plagues

Blood Frogs Vermin Beasts

Cattle plague Boils Hail Locusts Darkness

Death of the firstborn.

These are the ten plagues. Why were there ten plagues? Why these ten plagues? On one hand they can be viewed as punishment but on the other, they can be interpreted as being ten opportunities for repentance. Each chastisement was announced in advance, providing Pharaoh with ten face saving occasions to relent and to relinquish his stranglehold on the Israelites. But Pharaoh could not, or would not, see the error of his ways, and his hard heart was hardened. While G-d could have rescued the Israelites by other means, the plagues were necessary for the world to experience a confrontation with G-D.

This so called contest was far more than a humiliation of the unrepentant. It was also a judgment on all the gods of Egypt. The plagues fell on the principal divinities that were worshipped along the Nile River which was also a god. The frog was venerated as a sign of fruitfulness. The cattle, the sacred ram, the sacred goat, the sacred bull, were all smitten. The sacred beetle became a torment to those who had put their trust in its divinity. When we add the plague of darkness which showed the eclipse of Ra, the sun god, we see that we have here a contrast between the G-D of Israel, the Master of the universe, and the senseless gods of a senile civilization.

**At the mention of each plague, remove
a drop of wine from your cup.**

(Return to "the Second Cup" part 2)

The cup of Iniquity

As the drops of wine are removed by dipping our finger into the cup of "Praise," we place it to the small container on the table which is to be known from this time on as "the cup of Iniquity." It is filled with that which could not remain in the cup of Praise, because we and believers in the L-rd G-D Most High, blessed be He, cannot rejoice in the demise of even the enemies of G-D because He created even them.

We can all glory in our liberation, but we should not gloat over our fallen foes. When the waters of the sea of Reeds engulfed the Egyptians, the ministering angels began to sing praises. But G-D silenced them, saying, "My children perish. Cease your songs!" So we celebrate with less than a full heart, with less than a full cup. If your heart is like G-D'S heart, then allow yourself to shed a tear for each plague that is mentioned knowing "that but for the Grace of G-D, there goes you."

The cup of iniquity is a bitter cup. We have all had a taste of that cup at one time or another, but none of have had to drink it down to the last drop. To drink it to the bottom brings total brokenness and death. When we suffer because of our sins, we cry out to G-D to "save" us which is a good time for reflection. Did the Holy One bring the plagues upon the Egyptians, or did the Egyptians bring the plagues upon themselves? Did Noah's contemporaries call forth the flood, or did the sinful cities of Sodom and Gomorrah cause fire and brimstone to consume them? The process was begun by those who through their unrestrained attitudes and lewd actions, tainted their environments and blighted their own lifestyles.

Yeshua the Righteous, understood that He was to do something for His fellow man that they could not do for themselves. Empty this cup. He asked "if it were possible, remove this cup," but man would not repent and be healed, so He received it while on the Tree for all of mankind.

The Sandwich

One or two pieces of matzah about the size of a half dollar are distributed to each individual at the table. Each person then begins the process of dipping. First in haroset and then in to the maror.

According to Hillel, matzah and maror and the Pesah offering were eaten together in a sandwich during Temple times in order to fulfill the verse, "with matzot and maror they shall eat it" (Num. 9:11).

In color and texture, haroset resembles the mortar that we were to make as slaves. Its sweetness modifies the bitterness of the maror, which is horseradish. The sweetness of the haroset is an expression of optimism where as the maror has to do with the realities of life.

To punish the Hebrews, straw was withheld from them in the process of the brick making. The straw acted as a filler and binder that held the bricks together and made them lighter. Through the action of the acid in the vegetable matter that was released in the course of chemical decay, the strength and plasticity of the brick were greatly enhanced. Without the straw, many bricks shrank, cracked and lost shape as they were baked in the hot sun along with the Hebrew people. Keeping up the required volume was hard enough, without having the problem of defective bricks to contend with. To succeed, they were forced to gather their own straw in addition to the making of brick.

The Hebrews were slaves, not because they were inferior but because they were superior in their abilities. The hard work, while it seemed to punish, was G-D'S way of toughening up His people for a trip that would gain them their own identity and place in the world.

A sandwich is a bringing together of various elements to form one palatable thing. Even that which is extremely bitter can be combined with something sweet to enhance the overall taste. You can be sustained while having tears in your eyes and joy in your heart.

The Feast

The feast is a time of joy and fellowship. The feast is a time of satisfying hunger. The meal is a time to experience rest and even grow sleepy. The feast is a time for praise. The feast is a time for festive rejoicing, and talking. The feast is a time for serving and being served. The feast is a time for experiencing the unusual in an unusual setting.

Joy, fellowship, fullness, rested-ness, peaceful sleep, time to praise, rejoicing and experiencing the unusual are all things that slaves know very little of. The Passover meal is a time to celebrate liberation from slavery.

As you come to this meal, especially if you are a stranger to Bet Ami, you will be asked to step out of your world and into the concepts of "First Century Judaism." You will find that you are being exposed to new tastes and new ideas, that we as the family of Bet Ami, hope will strengthen your faith and increase your understanding of The "Salvational" aspect of G-D, Yeshua.

If you have problems at home or work, if you have fear or mental pain, if you are in bondage to substances or even concepts, if you are in slavery to others who control you or manipulate the way that you think or live, then won't you take time to reflect upon that which enslaves you and cry out to G-D just as the Children of Israel did, and find freedom here in the "Feast of Passover." Won't you symbolically leave your burdens here to be disposed of by someone who cares? Or perhaps you can take this time, while you enjoy yourself, to unburden someone else. Talk and be heard. Listen and be informed. Teaching and learning are both a part of the process of gaining "understanding" which brings us healing.

Tonight is the night of a "new start." Look back to the page on leaven and leave your uncleanness here. Take time to enjoy and be enjoyed. Give and receive peace and praise G-D Who is the Father of us all.

*(All problems left here will be disposed of)

Out of Hiding

After the meal, the service begins but is abruptly stopped because it is discovered that the Afikomen is missing. Somehow, during the meal, it was misplaced and can no longer be found. The Seder cannot continue until it is found. It is the last thing that is to be eaten and then you are to partake of the last two cups with its taste lingering in your mouth.

Every one is to make a search of the premises and then after a respectable time has elapsed, a plea is put out to the people indicating that a ransom or reward will be given to anyone who can find it. It is usually found to be in the possession of a small child who brings it forth and receives a reward of silver.

With its return, there is much laughter and happiness because it is as if we all found it together and receive the reward; "redemption." Redemption calls for more joy and festivity. The return of the Afikomen and the confusion and speculation all combine to remove the sleepiness that comes from eating the heavy meal.

Because its significance was primarily symbolic, the Pesah offering was eaten at the end of the meal when people were no longer hungry. In remembrance of this, we eat the Afikomen at the end of our meal. One of the meanings ascribed to it was the practice of going reveling from house to house after the Seder (Pesachim 119b).

The breaking of the middle matzah was a silent reflective act wherein part of the matzah was concealed to be searched out later so that the conclusion to the Passover meal could be experienced.

It is the larger piece of the middle matzah that is concealed, for more is hidden than is revealed. We, like the broken matzah were incomplete and so our children become the extension of our explorations for wholeness. We prepare for Passover in darkness and we end the Seder in darkness waiting for the "Day of Adonai" and the return of "His Messiah," the "Salvation of G-D."

The Third Cup

It is very fitting that immediately after the return of the Afikomen, that the third cup is raised in gratitude to G-D. This cup is called the cup of "Redemption." We know that this is the cup that Yeshua offered to his disciples and the one that He personally blessed as being symbolic of the new (renewed) covenant based on His death.

There has not been much thought to what was going on here because of the lack of understanding created by the separation of the "Church to the West" from its former host, Judaism. As more and more Gentile converts were grafted into this sect called Messianic Judaism, conflicts began to occur. When Constantine began to use these early converts to Judaism as his allies, he saw the value of this movement and as a result, he proclaimed that Christianity, the term it was now known by in the West, to be the state religion.

This was probably a very great mistake because the high standards of this "Noahatic movement" were now being compromised. The force populace began to rebel because their myriad of gods were being replace by the One G-d of Israel. In an effort to appease, Constantine allowed them to keep pagan holy days, and new interpretations were formulated to make the celebrating of these days plausible. Ishtar (Easter) was one of these days. Its purpose was to worship Ishtar with temple prostitution and the various traditions that we have children doing, even today, as a result of those pagan practices. Parents would be horrified if they knew what significance the eggs and bunnies portrayed.

Yeshua blessed this cup, and as a matter of covenant similar to that of marriage, passed it around to his other disciples. The cup and the bread are not new ordinances invented by Yeshua. What was new was the fact that He passed the third cup thus binding the covenant with any one who would be G-D'S disciple.

Elijah's Chair

An empty chair and a cup are always left at the Seder table in the event that the prophet Elijah might come and take over the festivities. There are prophecies that concern themselves with the fact that Elijah will come and herald in the coming of the Messiah.

At every Seder, participants are encouraged to go to the door and look up and down the street for the coming of the prophet.

During the ceremony of "circumcision" the eight day old boy is placed in the arms of one who is given the title of "G-D Father (sandak)." Then, the one who is to remove the foreskin comes. A drop or two of wine is placed in the baby's mouth and then the separation occurs. The one who does the removal is called "The Right Arm" (of the G-D Father). The chair that the G-D father sits in while holding the baby is called "Elijah's Chair."

The chair (kisse shel Eliyyahu) is symbolically meant for Elijah the prophet, called "the angel of Covenant" Mal. 3:1 (the Hebrew word for angel means messenger). It is usually richly carved and ornamented with embroideries. There is a Midrash that states "Elijah is present at every circumcision ceremony as a witness to the child entering into the Covenant of Abraham." Elijah is also identified as the guardian angel of the Jewish child.

The cup of Elijah (koso shel Eliyyahu) is not consumed. This custom became associated with the belief that Elijah had not died but had ascended to heaven in a fiery chariot, and that he would return as the forerunner of the Messiah. The festival of redemption from Egyptian bondage was naturally associated with the forerunner of the Messiah, who was expected in this season of redemption to herald the coming deliverance. John the Baptist was viewed in this manner because he was believed to have the "spirit of Elijah."

The Fourth Cup

The fourth cup is the last cup to be dealt with. In observing this cup, we must review the other cups.

1. First cup = Sanctification
2. Second cup = Praise
3. The cup of iniquity is not consumed by us.
4. The third cup = Redemption
5. The cup of Elijah is not consumed by us but it is a reminder to be watchful.
6. The fourth cup = the cup of the Kingdom.

After blessing the third cup and passing it to his disciples, Yeshua, stated "I will not partake of the fruit of the vine until I do it with you in the Kingdom." This is very significant because he did not partake of the fourth cup and as a result, that Seder is left open to anyone who wants to join with Him in it.

Yeshua called Himself the vine and indicated that His followers are the branches. Israel, in the biblical idiom, is often likened to the vine, and the Jewish people are crushed repeatedly, yet this agonizing process is the beginning, not the end of the story. In the crushing, the fruit of the vine undergoes a startling metamorphosis, turning into heady juices that gladden the heart. They mellow and mature with time, becoming the valued companions of the connoisseur (G-D). Like the fruit of the vine, Israel is destined for the table of the King of Kings.

Yeshua declared Himself to be the "living Torah" (the Word) of G-D. As such, He becomes the bridegroom and the Israel of G-D (on Shabbat) becomes the bride. There are many strangers who have been grafted in to the Israel of G-D, just as there were many strangers involved in the Exodus from Egypt. The Greek version of the Torah (translated by Jews from Hebrew into the Greek) calls that group that went out following Moses, "Ekklesia" (Church).

Songs of Praise

The following psalms in the Hallel are the same as those the Levites chanted in the temple when the Paschal sacrifices were offered. Note the expression, "servants of the L-rd." Our Sages explain: "Heretofore you were servants of Pharaoh; now you are servants of the Lord. You are My servants, and servants cannot possess other servants."

Halleluyah, Oh servants of the L-rd
praise the name of the Lord. Praised
is the name of the L-rd from this time
forth and into forever. From the rising
of the sun unto its setting, The L-rd's name
is most greatly to be Praised. The L-rd is supreme
above all nations; Who is like the L-rd our G-D, En-
throned oh so high, yet Who looks down, to consider
both the heavens and the earth? He raises up the
poor out of the dust, and lifts up the needy from
the deep pit, to seat them all together with
princes, together with the princes
of His people. He
makes the
childless
wife a
happy
mother
of children.
Oh Halleluyah!
Praise the Holy One.
Praise the Holy One of Israel
Who gave us The Cup of Gladness.

Acceptance

Acceptance means to respond to in an affirmative manner; to receive formally as into an organization. To acknowledge; to take to oneself; to receive with favor.

When people have to know what someone else believes, before they can "fellowship" with them, they think that they do G-D a favor. When all forms of so called "acceptance" are based upon having a certain knowledge, then this acceptance, while giving the appearance of being very G-dly, is in fact very prejudice and in opposition to Biblical Godliness. It could be better termed ignorance of the objectives of G-D.

Often, the peoples of the biblical text found atonement (fellowship) with G-D through acts of obedience without ever understanding any supposed doctrine or how something worked. G-D asked Job what he knew about how things happened and Job found that he knew very little about what G-D knows.

When you refuse to accept someone because your "belief-system" is different from theirs, what you are in effect saying is that your way is the only way, and that your understanding of what G-D said is the way that G-D really feels.

Think it over: If salvation is through the knowing a certain thing or through the use of certain buzz words, then who can be saved? There are many religious organizations, all claiming to be correct, that reserve salvation for themselves and themselves alone.

When you seat yourself in the position of judging who is right and who is wrong, who will enter in and who will not, then you have set yourself on the throne of the "Righteous Judge." Torah teaches "Vengeance (judgement) is mine says the L-rd." When you presume to sit in judgement on another, you take that place at "the Right Hand of the Father, that has been reserved for someone else. You take the place reserved for G-D Himself.

"Resurrection"

Like all ancient peoples, the early Hebrews believed that the dead go down onto the underworld and live there a colorless existence (Isa. 14:15 - 19 Ezek. 32:21 - 30). Only an occasional person like Enoch or Elijah, could escape from Sheol (Hell) and be taken into the presence of G-D where they became angels. * Angel in the Hebrew means messenger and not always an extra-terrestrial.

This older Hebrew conception of life regarded the nation so entirely as a "unit" that no individual mortality or immortality was considered. Still today, the prevalent view in Judaism is that "salvation is corporate" and not on an individual basis. That is why one is hard pressed to find any mention of the concept of "personal salvation" or a "personal savior" that is so often taught in the church.

Another perspective held by the authors of the Psalms was a belief that at death only the wicked went to Sheol, while the soul of the righteous went directly to G-D. In the long run, these points of view asserted themselves in the form of Messianic hopes where the many might share in the glory of the Messianic Kingdom. In Daniel 12:1-4, a resurrection of "many . . . that sleep in the dust" is looked forward to. This resurrection included both righteous and wicked, for some will awake to everlasting life, others to "shame and everlasting contempt."

The Sadducees of Yeshua's day denied the resurrection so that is why they sought so often to trap Him by the questions. Both the Pharisees and the Essenes believed in the resurrection of the body. The belief was that the resurrection will be achieved by G-D, who alone holds the key to it. But at the same time the elect ones, among these being, Messiah, Elijah and all of the righteous, shall assist in raising the dead.

The resurrection will be universal, but after judgment the wicked will die a second death and forever be separated from G-D and those whose sins were forgiven. Who are the righteous? The martyrs in the cause of G-D.

Yeshua and Resurrection

The final authentication for the messiah-ship of Yeshua is Resurrection. This was the last of the great miracles associated with Him. Yeshua referred to Himself as "the bread of life." This is a *remez* looking back to the desert journey where the children of Israel were sustained by "mana of Heaven." The mana, the miraculously supplied food on which the Israelites subsisted in the wilderness, sustained the people during their arduous trip prior to entering the promised land. To them it was the very "bread" of life and is designated as such in Ex. 16:4.

Its name is said to have originated in the question "What is it" but the name is also a play on the Egyptian word for food, "*mennu*." It continued to descend during the forty years the Israelites were in the wilderness, but when they arrived at Gilgal, on the 14th of Nisan, and began to eat the grain grown there, the mana ceased to fall.

From that time on, the people were sustained on various forms of leavened bread except for the eight days commemorating the Passover. During the Passover the un-leavened bread was referred to as the bread of affliction. It is this unleavened bread or "matzah" that is broken and eaten at the Passover celebration each year.

Yeshua stated that "man should not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of G-D." This infers, just as bread sustains a man physically, Torah sustains a man spiritually. Since Yeshua proclaimed Himself "bread of Life," He was also indicating that He was the Living Torah scroll.

Every Shabbat, two proclamations are made that G-D is to be blessed for creating "the fruit of the vine" and for "bringing forth bread from the earth." These two blessings parallel the first and last miracles that Yeshua performed; turning water into wine and resurrection. The latter blessing portrays Him as the bread that came from the earth: the Son of man. When the blessing is said over the bread it is called the *motzi*; the lifting up. In being lifted up He declared "He would draw all men to Him."

"Messiah"

At the close of every prayer service, it is the vision of the Messianic era that is alluded to. It is in the concluding of the "Aleinu, the closing prayer, the Jewish people recite:

Ve-ne'emar: Ve-hayah Adonay le-melekh al lol ha-arez, bayom ha-hu yehyeh Adonay ehad u-shemo ehad.

"And it is said G=D will be king over all the world : on that day G-D will be One and His name will be One."

(Zechariah 14:9)

MaShiYaH means the **anointing one**. This is the true meaning of the word "Christ" that is so often used in the New Testament. There are still many today that do not connect the Hebrew concept of Messiah with the designation, "Christ."

The Hebrew is a marvelous language in that it holds so many secrets. When you read the word MASHiYah backwards, two words are created; (Hay), "there will then live, (SheM) "the name of the Almighty.

There is a prophesy that Messiah will be "One like unto Moses (MosheH)." In the Hebrew, MosheH read backwards and you have the word HaSheM. This is the obvious but substitutionary word used by devout Jews to keep from using G-D'S name in vain. HaSheM means Ha-the, and Shem - name.

Another interesting thing about this one who would pre-figure the coming of Messiah is that his name Moses, combined with his occupation of teacher, MoSheH RaBeYNU, has a numerical value of 613. Moses has been titled as the " Law-giver" and the number of laws that he gave the people of Israel was 613.

Note: being the "Law-giver" does not indicate that he created these laws, but only made them known to G-D'S people.

Giving

Giving is a matter of attitude. You cannot truly take without ever giving. The G-D of creation is praised because He is the great giver. It is written "He causes the rain to fall on both the good and the evil." This is the great goodness and mercy of G-D in that He has compassion on all because they lack understanding.

G-D borrowed from the Earth to make a body for man. He also took from Himself to give that body life. When we die, our bodies are returned to the earth and our souls are returned to G-D from whence they came.

G-D gives to you, which obligates you, to give. You are to give out of your abundance. No matter where you attend, you are obligated to support the facility and all of its costs. If you cannot support the place that you learn and worship, then why do you attend? To attend a fellowship and take while not supporting it, is robbing the others that are involved in that fellowship.

In addition to giving to support your learning facility, you are admonished by G-D to take an additional portion of your increase, to give to those who are less fortunate than yourself.

Giving is an attitude that must be developed. To not give is to tell others, "I do not trust G-D." Trust for G-D is a thing that is learned and developed. In the beginning, you start the process like the Children of Israel did. They placed the blood over the door in obedience and began the process of learning to "trust G-D." They made the sacrifice and found comfort in G-D'S provision. You may also have to sacrifice to give. At first it is hard but after a while it becomes a part of your nature. If you feel that you have never quite belonged, or your needs were not being met in a way that made you feel whole, then ask yourself, "what have I given"? Have I supported like I wish to be supported? Have I cared for others as I wish to be cared for? Even those who give out of the evil inclination so that they can receive, will be blessed by G-D. Try it!

Anti-Christ or Anti semitism.

I have watched for years as numerous identifications of the Anti-Christ have been speculatively put forth. President Carter, Kissinger, Dr. Ruth and recently, Prince Charles, have all come and gone as suspected candidates.

The true identity of the Anti-Christ is quite easy to discern if you listen to what the text says about him. First, he is called the "Lawless one." This is not too hard to figure out; he does not keep the law. He is antinomian or against the law. Next he is called one who opposes the "Saints."

When we think of the word "Saint" most people think Catholic. There are numerous saints that are venerated in the Catholic (universal) religion. This would lead one, who hasn't thought about it very much, to believe that the Anti-Christ will be against The Catholic Church and all of its daughters. We must remember that the O.T and the N.T. were both originally Jewish in nature and as such convey Hebrew thinking even though some of the N.T. books were written in Greek.

If you take the Greek concept of saint and return it to its original form, you come up with the concept of "Hasidut" or a "hasid." The Hasidim, the plural of hasid, considered themselves not bound by the law; "those in front of the law." Were they antimomian or against the law? "G-D forbid." They were those who strove to go beyond the law, meaning that they advocated building fences around existing laws so that they would not even come close to breaking one. They considered themselves as being of a "divine and lofty type of piety."

Next you will have to ask yourself, "Do I believe that the Anti-Christ will be anti-Christian or anti-semitic? Your answer will all depend on whether you believe in replacement theology or not. If you believe that G-D is through with the Jewish people except to punish and turn them away in deference to a non-Jewish, non-law keeping group, who He now likes better, then you do believe in "replacement theology."

As long as you are asking yourself questions; who is your authority, Paul or Yeshua? It "appears" that Paul makes numerous statements indicating that the "law is somehow done away with. But Yeshua stated, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill (Heb. - explain) them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until every thing is accomplished."

When you ask a Jew what the law is, He will tell you that "it is the first five books of the Bible." Do you believe that Paul avocated doing away with the first five books of the Old Testament? Paul asked this question in the book of Romans 3:31 Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law."

Is it possible that Paul saw himself as one beyond the law; a Hasid who lived in the realm of spiritual piety? And, was he tring to convey to his new Roman converts that "faith" in G-D, the Jewish G-D, is what starts the entry level process of salvation and that the learning of the law comes later in the process? Is this why Paul uses Abraham as an example to the Romans, because Abraham started up with G-D on the basis of "faith" and G-D worked with Abraham, his son Isaac, Jacob and ultimately gave to the children of Jacob, the developed rules for a G-DLY society?

**Who is lawless and against Israel or Jacob?
His twin brother, Esau. Esau is the Anti-Christ.**

Now we know who the Children of Abraham are. They are those literal descendants of Jacob and any strangers who bind themselves to the Israel of G-D and who, like Ruth, who stated to her Jewish mother-in-law "Where you go I will go, where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your G-D will be my G-D."

Who are the "Children of Esau?"

Biblical Villans or Anti-Messiahs

Esau (ESaV) is the first born son of Isaac. It was said of him "And the first born came forth ruddy, all over like a hairy mantle; and they called his name Esau." Esau's name comes from the Hebrew root *Asah* which means "to do" and in it's widest application as follows: accomplish, bruise, deal, displease, hinder, sin, finish, done, complete and etc. Not only did Esau come forth "complete," but that is how he thought of himself. he was already perfect; hence, he had no need of perfecting himself. He knew it all; hense, he had no reason to learn any more. Wo to anyone who thinks he is perfect and who knows what is best for others. This is the kind of person who is truly finished but not complete.

Pharaoh (PaROH). What is the secret of Pharaoh's success? What is the source of his danger to the Jewish people? The letters, resh and ayin, that spell the Hebrew word for "evil" (ra) are central to Pharaoh's name. Evil dwelled within him. The two letters that surrounding the "ra" on either side form the word PeH. This is the word for mouth and it is the power of the mouth to couch evil in such a way that it seems acceptable. Hitler was a mad man but he was eloquent in speech and a genius at propaganda. Hitler was santioned by Esau.

Laban (LaVaN) is more dangerous than Pharaoh. His name means white, so on the surface, Laban hypocritically offered the image of purity. It is only by reading his name backwards in the Hebrew that we discover a word that means reprobate (NaVaL). Laban kissed Jacob, but it was a kiss of death, far more dangerous than the sword of Pharaoh. Jacob was wary of the kiss of Esau and still today, the descendants of Jacob are wary of "Esau's kiss" Gen. 38.

Amalek (AMaLeK) has a numerical value of 240. (SaFeK) "doubt" also has a numerical value is 240.

"Bet Ami"

*A place where Christianity and Judaism
can meet together in peace.*

We do our very best at Bet Ami to teach the rich heritage of the Jewish faith and to portray it in such a way, as to make it become quite clear that it is the root system of Christianity. Thus, it has the ability to clarify many obscure concepts that so many of the various denominations are deliberating over today.

By teaching what we do, in a non-threatening manner, we hope to strike at the heart of the division between Christianity and Judaism. We are not associated with any one particular denomination, although we are a congregation comprised of people from numerous religious backgrounds, who have come together in unity over a love for the Jewish people and their G-D.

It is not our wish to convert you to Judaism, Messianic, or otherwise, but only to give you the information you need to enhance your own personal belief-system. Bet Ami is not for everyone, although some have said "When we came through the door, we knew we were home." We encourage visitors to work within their existing congregations, to upgrade their "faithfulness" and to educate others as they learn. That is why we continue to share our educational programs such as The Passover, Purium (The feast of Esther), Family Shabbat and "The Wedding." We are also able to bring these rich cultural experiences to your facility upon request.

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the end.

This is Just
the beginning