

TIKKUN AMERICA

restore

Issue 45 | Nisan | April 2025

PASSOVER AND OUR CALL TO BE A BLESSING

From Abraham, to Moses and You!

BLESSED ASSURANCE

Don't Leave Earth Without It

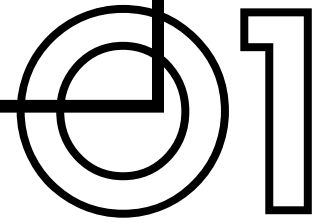
PREPARING FOR THE FREEDOM OF PESACH

Anticipation for Liberation

THE FREEDOM OF LITURGY

A Charismatic Appeal

CONTRIBUTORS



MORGAN KRUPINSKI

Morgan is a worship leader and attends New Jerusalem House of Prayer in Carol Stream, IL. A native New Yorker, he learned of his grandparent's Jewish heritage at 15 and got involved in Messianic Judaism after being radically saved at age 20. He is married to Yudit, a second-generation Jewish believer and graduate of Wheaton College.

TROY WALLACE

Troy B. Wallace is the Vice President of Congregation & Leadership Development at Jewish Voice Ministries. Troy served at El Shaddai Congregation in Maryland as a ministry intern and later as Assistant Congregational Leader. He also served on staff with Revive Israel, an indigenous apostolic ministry based in Jerusalem and led by Asher Intrater, serving as Director of Revive Israel North America.



MARK RANTZ

Rabbi Mark has served in full-time Messianic Jewish ministry for since 2001. In early 2013, Rabbi Rantz joined Messianic Jewish Publishers and Resources (MJPR) and served as the Assistant Editor and lead contributor in the production of the Complete Jewish Study Bible. He and his wife Kat lead Congregation Beit Hallel in Ocala, FL.

ROBERT BLOCH

Rabbi Robert Bloch serves alongside his wife Yesenia and his father Rabbi Rene Bloch as the congregational leaders at Beth Shalom Messianic Jewish Congregation in Corona, CA. Rabbi Robert and Yesenia have been married for 23 years and have 3 children. Robert holds a Master's Degree in Messianic Jewish Studies from MJTI and served as Secretary for the UMJC from 2010 to 2012.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Editor-in-Chief **Benjamin Juster**

Creative Director	Amy Strom
Senior Editor	Mark Rantz
Editor	Silvie Lundgren
Editor	Kathleen Rantz
Graphic Design	Amy Strom
Content Manager	Mark Rantz
Project Manager	Amy Strom
Advisor	Lorena Juster



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06 CHOOSE THE RIGHT FREEDOM

BENJAMIN JUSTER

**12 PASSOVER AND OUR CALL TO BE A
BLESSING**

MARK RANTZ

17 BLESSED ASSURANCE

ROBERT BLOCH



HELLO

ISSUE

45



**25 PREPARING FOR THE FREEDOM OF
PESACH**

TROY WALLACE

31 THE FREEDOM OF LITURGY

MORGAN KRUNPINSKI

EDITOR IN CHIEF

BENJAMIN JUSTER

Benjamin is the President of Tikkun America and one of the shaliach leaders on the Tikkun America Apostolic Team. Raised in the Messianic movement and a former Vice President of the UMJCY, Benjamin has a continuing passion for seeing people reach their potential in Yeshua. He holds a Masters degree in Messianic Jewish Studies from MJTI.



He served as the Executive Director of Tikkun International before being appointed the President of Tikkun America in January 2020. Benjamin's focus is on planting Messianic congregations, mentoring and releasing emerging leaders, and building unity among churches and ministries to stand with Israel today and in preparation for the end times. Benjamin and Lorena also help to lead the international teaching ministry Restoration From Zion, affiliated with Tikkun Global.

Benjamin, his wife Lorena, and three children live in Jacksonville, Florida.



Choose the Right Freedom

BENJAMIN JUSTER

Passover is a time of profound remembrance, celebrating the miraculous deliverance of the Hebrew people from Egyptian bondage. After centuries of oppression, God intervened, fulfilling His promises to Abraham and Moses, bringing true freedom to His people.

Modern culture often defines freedom as the ability to do whatever one pleases. The prevailing mantra of individualism—"Don't tell me what to do"—suggests that freedom means a lack of constraints. But is that really the case? What happens when personal desires conflict with each other?

The Rolling Stones famously sang, *"You can't always get what you want, but if you try sometimes, well, you might find, you get what you need."* This lyric hints at a deeper truth: that true freedom is not about indulging every whim but about choosing wisely between conflicting desires. Timothy Keller insightfully observed, *"Modern freedom is the freedom of self-assertion. I am free if I may do whatever I want. But defining freedom this way, as the absence of constraint on choices, is unworkable because it is an impossibility."*

Freedom Always Requires Choice

From the very beginning, God designed humanity with the power of choice. Adam and Eve, placed in a garden of abundance, were given the option to obey or rebel. Without choice, there is no real freedom.

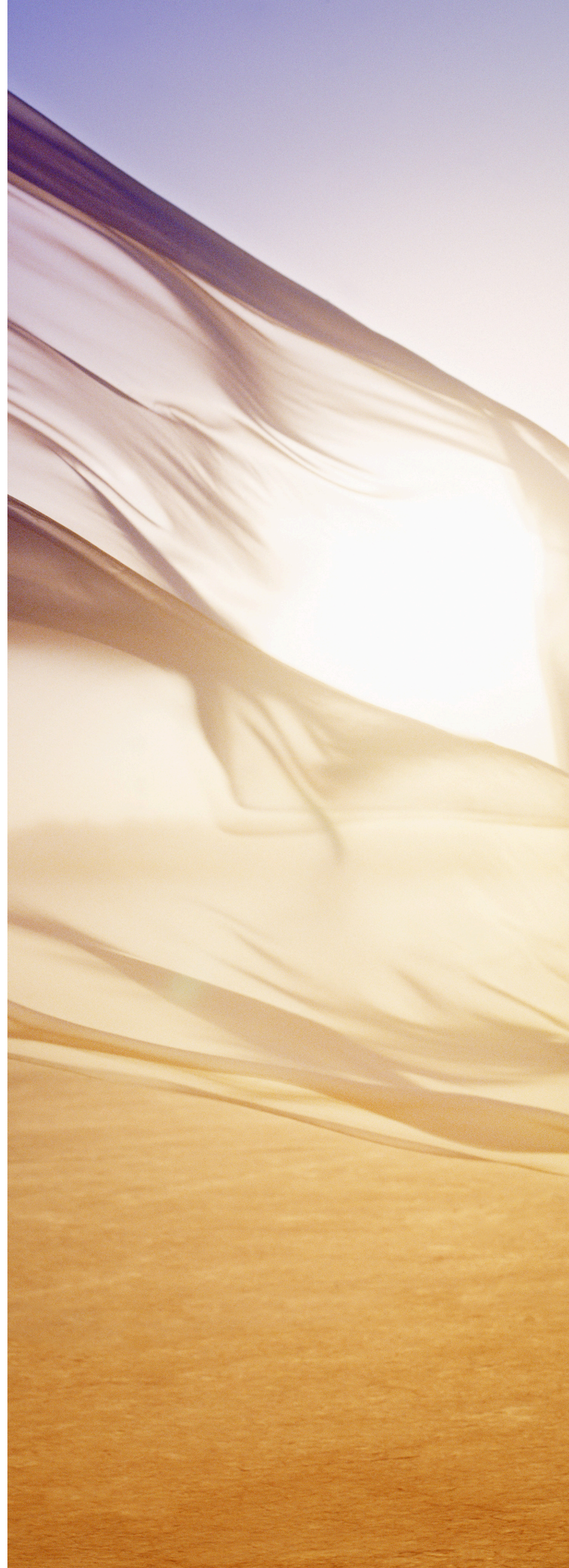
Genesis 2:16-17 states: *"Then Adonai Elohim commanded the man, saying, 'From all the trees of the garden you are most welcome to eat. But of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil you must not eat. For when you eat from it, you most assuredly will die!'"*

The freedom to choose often requires giving up one thing in favor of another. A person may desire to eat chocolate cake every night but also want to maintain good health. One must prioritize one desire over the other.

1 Corinthians 10:23 reminds us: *"Everything is permitted—but not everything is helpful. Everything is permitted—but not everything builds up."*

Which kind of freedom is more important: the immediate gratification of eating cake or the long-term benefit of health and vitality?

Similarly, an aspiring athlete must surrender leisure time, unhealthy food, and personal indulgences to achieve excellence. Olympians understand this principle: great freedom in performance requires great sacrifice. The same applies to education, career development, and spiritual growth. True freedom involves discipline and the willingness to forsake lesser desires for a greater purpose.



Freedom Is More Than Safety

Is a fish in a tank truly free? It may be protected from predators and provided with food, yet it remains confined, dependent, and unable to explore the vast ocean for which it was created. Safety and comfort can deceive us into thinking we are free when we are merely contained within the boundaries of fear and complacency.

Consider the Israelites: soon after escaping Egypt, they longed for their former lives of bondage, where they at least had predictable meals and shelter. They preferred the familiarity of slavery to the uncertainties of the wilderness.

True freedom is not the absence of hardship—it is the ability to choose what is right, even when it requires personal sacrifice.

Matthew 16:25 states: *"For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it."*

True freedom is not found in worldly security but in trusting God's provision, even in the unknown. As Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 3:17: *"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."*

True Freedom Requires Sacrifice

Our culture teaches that freedom means limitless choices. But in reality, true freedom always requires sacrifice.

Athletes must give up comfort to train. Esther risked her life to save her people. Yeshua gave up His will and even His own life to fulfill the Father's plan.





God has placed natural and spiritual constraints upon us. When we function within those constraints, we operate in alignment with true freedom. Consider an airplane—it cannot carry unlimited weight and still fly. A pilot must respect the plane's design and physics for it to function safely.

Likewise, our lives must be lived according to God's principles to experience true freedom. When we reject His boundaries, we may feel free momentarily, but ultimately, we set ourselves up for failure and destruction.

Love is the key to true sacrifice. When we love deeply, we willingly surrender our desires for the sake of another. Timothy Keller further observed, *"You cannot experience the freedom of love unless you limit yourself in significant ways. There is no greater feeling of liberation than to feel and be loved well."*

Yeshua exemplified this when He said: *"For I have come down from heaven not to do My own will but the will of the One who sent Me."* (John 6:38)

Was Yeshua free? Absolutely! He had complete freedom, yet He chose to surrender His will to the Father's. True freedom is not found in doing whatever we want—it is found in aligning ourselves with God's will.

The Greatest Freedom Is Found in Fulfilling God's Will

Yeshua declared: *"If you abide in My word, then you are truly My disciples. You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."* (John 8:31-32)

How can obedience to God's law lead to freedom? The answer lies in love. When we love someone, we naturally desire to do what pleases them. Similarly, when we love God, we find joy in following His ways.

James 1:25 affirms: *"But the one who looks intently into the perfect Torah, the Torah that gives freedom, and continues in it—not becoming a hearer who forgets but a doer who acts—he shall be blessed in what he does."*

The New Covenant writes God's law on our hearts so that obeying Him is no longer a burden but a delight. As John 14:15 states: *"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."*

We also owe our freedom to those who came before us—mentors, family members, and the community.



True freedom does not isolate; it calls us to build up others.

1 Corinthians 10:23-24 says: *"Everything is permitted—but not everything is helpful. Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor."*

Freedom is meaningful only when it enables us to do something good. We were created to know, love, and serve God. Living for anything else leads to slavery. Living for Him sets us free to become who we were meant to be.

Choosing the Right Freedom

Passover reminds us that freedom is a choice. Will we settle for the illusion of freedom, like a fish in a tank? Or will we embrace the true freedom that comes from living within God's design?

The Israelites had to choose to leave behind their enslavement to embrace their God-given identity. Likewise, we must choose to step out in faith, make sacrifices, and submit to God's perfect will.

For forty years, the Hebrews wandered until they learned to trust God's plan. Yeshua, however, walked in perfect freedom because He aligned His will with the Father's.

When we walk in true freedom, we become a beacon for others to follow. May we, like Yeshua, come to a place where we can say:

"I only do what I see My Father doing."
(John 5:19)

Chag Pesach Sameach!

 **Benjamin Juster**
Editor in Chief

A large, abstract yellow brushstroke graphic that serves as a background for the text. It consists of numerous overlapping, vertical, and slightly wavy strokes of varying lengths and opacities, creating a textured, painterly effect. The strokes are centered horizontally and occupy the middle portion of the image.

**"Embrace the true
freedom that
comes from
living within
God's design."**

-Benjamin Juster



Passover and our Calling to be a Blessing

MARK RANTZ

Have you ever considered our annual celebration of Passover as both a commemoration of deliverance, but also a recounting of our Adonai's blessings, and equally, our commission to be a blessing? This is something which has recently struck me, as I have considered both our calling as a Messianic Jewish community, and the fact that as the Jewish people, we are called to extended God's hand of blessing to the world, and are commissioned to be schluchim (ambassadors) of

blessings for the whole world. In Judaism, this is nothing new and is shored up in the phrase "Tikkun Olam", our calling to repair the world. This is likewise true as we live as Messianic-believers in Yeshua, (and as both Jews and Gentiles) are called to extend eternal and transformational blessings in proclaiming that our Mashiach, Yeshua has come!

It is in the Tanakh that we find the foundation of blessing for Israel, where in Genesis chapter 3 Adonai calls to our father, Abram saying, *"My heart's desire is to make you into a great nation, to bless you, to make your name great so that you may be a blessing."* (Gen. 12:2 TLV) Within the context of this declaration of the Abrahamic covenant at Genesis 12:1-3, five-times God promises blessings for Israel, while ensuring curses (v. 3b) to those who oppose, oppress or harm Israel. From this we are reminded of not only the Lord's great love for His people, but also how He will judge without mercy those who harm the apple of His eye. (Zech. 2:8-9) From a practical perspective, the words of the Abrahamic covenant is both a defense and mandate for moral and transformational leadership, and a reminder of our mission as the Lord's beloved is to be proclaimers of both blessings and justice! We are called above all things to be a blessing!

Interestingly enough, this was recently echoed by Israeli actress Gal Gadot (Wonder Woman) on March 4th when she spoke after receiving Anti-Defamation League International Leadership Award in stating, *"It is time to pass onto our children a love of who they are. So, who are we? We the Jewish people are an ancient people, with an ancient story, and an ancient homeland. We are the people that celebrate life! We work to see a better and more peaceful future, we [are the ones who] challenge hate when we face it, but we do it with love, while*



always striving to make the world a better place."

In recent years, transformational leadership has emerged as a popular theme for both business schools, fields of ministerial training and both Graduate and post-Graduate programs. Although many would like to "credit" the concept of transformational leadership studies to those like James MacGregor Burns, I believe that the real source is Adonai and His calling to Abraham, national Israel and to us (both Jewish and Gentile believers) to be the sh'lichim of blessings to all of creation. For this reason, Justin Irving and Mark Strauss aptly note how in a biblical context that,

"Servant leadership [as embodied in blessing] is focused on people rather than on tasks, then valuing and appreciating those people should be among the highest priorities of the leader."

It is from this that we are ever reminded that our greatest callings is to be a blessing to others and to proclaim the eternal blessings of our God in Messiah Yeshua our Passover Lamb! In reading this, you might be asking me, "How in fact do the promises and callings of the Abrahamic covenant apply to, or be seen in the context of our annual celebration?" Furthermore, you may reason saying, "Aren't these two separate things where Moses is simply chronicling Adonai's promises to Abram and his seed, while Passover stands as a marker of our deliverance from Egypt?" To these friends, the answer is clear, when we remember that "blessing" and "the calling to be a blessing" is embedded in every Jewish holy day, celebration and even our weekly remembrance of creation on Shabbat! It is in blessing and blessing alone that God has chosen a people as His very own, and has called us to be agents of those blessings who do not know. Through every celebration we proclaim God's goodness, faithfulness and His calling that we reflect, illuminate hope and blessing. Our calling as both recipients and ambassadors of blessing is best seen in the Passover Seder itself, within the "Four Questions" where we read:

"We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and the LORD our God brought us out with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. And if the Holy One, blessed be He, had not brought our fathers out from Egypt – then we and our children and children's children would still be slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt."

From our Haggadah we see that it was the blessings of God which delivered our ancestors from Egypt, as so we are commanded from God in His Torah to recount our deliverance from bondage, as being brought from slavery to freedom and from death to life in His great and everlasting love! As we celebrate Pesach, we not only experience blessing, but also extend blessing to the world as a reminder of God's unfailing love for all of creation. Most notably however, the word Egypt in the Hebrew (*mitzra'im*) can literally be translated "to strangle," and so, it is sin which strangles our lives and keeps us from fellowship with Avienu, our loving, Heavenly Father. Through Messiah, all of us (both Jews and Gentiles alike) are brought close, redeemed and given eternal hope and blessings. Where sin once strangled us and separated us from God, now through Yeshua our slain and risen Passover Lamb, we have the promise of eternal life - This is the greatest of all blessings!





For this Passover dear friends, above all things – take hold of Messiah’s blessings of hope, life and redemption for you. Take upon your hearts and your lives, our Heavenly Fathers calling to be sh’lichim (ambassadors) of Blessing, Hope and Salvation for the world!

Chag Pesach Sameach! 



**WE ARE CALLED ABOVE
ALL THINGS TO BE A
BLESSING!**

MARK RANTZ



Blessed Assurance

ROBERT BLOCH

For those who remember the old American Express slogan, “Don’t Leave Home Without It” likewise will recall how this company has long been a household name for finance and travel.

This American Express slogan made me do some deeper thinking into our heavenly coverage and whether we know the terms and conditions of our coverage. To illustrate my thought process, I thought of this fictitious story.

There were two cars involved in an auto accident. One had car insurance; and the other was uninsured. In fact, the non insured individual also had an expired license and was unemployed. What a nightmare!

For the insured driver, he had insurance, but he also had two choices after leaving the scene of the accident. He could curse up a storm and allow this accident to haunt him for the rest of his life, or he can realize what he has, which is top notch car insurance, with the promise to repair his car.

All of us come to various crossroads in this life where we either make it or break it.

Why this story? Because it's possible you have been in a similar situation since most of us have been involved in a car accident. Yet more importantly, this is a powerful reminder that everyone makes mistakes in this life in one way or another.

"Since all have sinned and come short of earning God's praise." (Rom. 3:23)

Our heavenly coverage leads us to knowing that,

"If we acknowledge our sins, then, since he is trustworthy and just, he will forgive them and purify us from all wrongdoing." (1 John 1:9)

Just as there are people who are insured and many who are likewise, uninsured, there are those who live with "assurance." Those who have assurance understand that when we sin, we have coverage called "blessed assurance" and in knowing exactly what to do.

Those with blessed assurance are to call upon our Heavenly Assurance Agent - Yeshua the Messiah. His heavenly connection is never busy and is always accessible, and when he answers our call, we know that if we confess our sins, that we will receive full coverage for the sins we have committed.

The unfortunate reality is that most people believe the lie that they can live without "assurance," much like those without car insurance. Spiritually, this means the "unassured." The unassured do not desire Yeshua's "light" coverage which exposes all the sinfulness from the inside out. Since this "light" coverage comes with a high cost, many claim they don't need it.

But there are two sides to the story ...
In 1 John we therefore see,

"If we claim not to have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. Likewise, if we claim we have not been sinning and that our deeds have been above reproach, we are making God out to be a liar, and his Word is not in us."

Neither one of these claims are covered, in fact they are mere excuses for not letting God judge our inmost heart, in accordance with his Word.

So, if we sin as those "assured" how are we to respond to those who sin against us?

According to our "Biblical Assurance Coverage" -as seen in Matthew 6:14-15,





- Hurt people hurt people.
- Forgiven people should forgive others.

There are no “shortcuts” for those in Messiah, rather inspired instruction to forgive those who have sinned against us. This releases the offender where the offended forgives and moves onward in Messiah.

There is another piece of wisdom that has really helped which says the following –

Forgiveness for the past does not demand trust in the future.

I choose to forgive those who hurt me, as the Lord has forgiven me time and time again, yet that certainly does not mean that I can trust them because trust is established overtime and is tested by proven character.

Deep healing and restoration in a broken relationship is established at the speed of trust. Another important factor to regaining trust in a relationship is the willingness of the offender to “behave themselves out of the patterns they behaved themselves into.”

In the case of Joseph’s brothers – led by Judah, they experienced genuine repentance through admission of guilt, confession and behavioral change.

To learn better behavior, we need to be filled with the right FRUIT – the Fruit of the Spirit.

“For if you forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will not forgive yours.”

Many claim to follow Messiah while living by a double standard. They want to be forgiven, yet they do not forgive those who have offended them. Those who live by this double standard should be encouraged to read and meditate on their heavenly policy and stop making up their own.

I share this insight as a person and a leader, basically someone who has been hurt time after time, yet I have learned something that has helped me forgive others regardless of the offense.

Thus, according to Galatians 5:22-23,

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility, self control. Nothing in the Torah stands against such things."

Fruit does not come from efforts like legalistic rule-following, or attitudes that exude "do I really have to do this," but instead must grow naturally out of trust.

Forgiveness is very rooted in the reading of Parashah Vayigash – and is seen when [Judah] drew near,

"At last Yosef could no longer control his feelings in front of his attendants and cried, 'Get everybody away from me!' So no one else was with him when Yosef revealed to his brothers who he was. He wept aloud, and the Egyptians heard, and Pharaoh's household heard. Yosef said to his brothers, 'I am Yosef! Is it true that my father is still alive?' His brothers couldn't answer him, they were so dumbfounded at seeing him. Yosef said to his brothers, 'Please! Come closer.' And they came closer. He said, 'I am Yosef, your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. But don't be sad that you sold me into slavery here or angry at yourselves, because it was God who sent me ahead of you to preserve life. The famine has been over the land for the last two years, and for yet another five years there will be neither plowing nor harvest.



God sent me ahead of you to ensure that you will have descendants on earth and to save your lives in a great deliverance.” (Genesis 45:1-4)

As a result, Joseph forgave his brothers, but many years later, after Jacob died, the brothers were not so confident, so they made up a story and came to Joseph fearing that he would now take revenge upon them.

“Realizing that their father was dead, Yosef’s brothers said, ‘Yosef may hate us now and pay us back in full for all the suffering we caused him.’ So they sent a message to Yosef which said, ‘Your father gave this order before he died: ‘Say to Yosef, ‘I beg you now, please forgive your brothers’ crime and wickedness in doing you harm.’ So now, we beg of you, forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father.” Yosef wept.” (Genesis 50:15-21)

Some of us live like Joseph’s brothers, meaning unsure about true forgiveness.
– People in this category cannot relate to the “Assurance Policy” that Joseph had, so they lived in the world of “Unresolved Mysteries.” After all, did Joseph really mean it the first time? Can someone really forgive those who sold him into slavery?

Joseph weeps because his brothers haven't really understood that he really forgave them then and now. His forgiving them was not based upon the fact that their father was no longer alive.



This is a timely reminder for the body of Messiah. Are we covered with the "Blessed Assurance" which is our confidence in Yeshua's salvation and love? If so, the natural "fruit" from within our lives should cause us to forgive others, thus leading by example. Yeshua said - *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."* (Matt. 5:16)

Even though the New Year is behind us and we are now entering into our Passover season of redemption, how many people have kept the New Year Resolutions they have made?

Many promised to eat better, feel better, look better, yet in reality - looking better, and feeling better, and digesting our food better are the results of living a life of genuine forgiveness. This means letting the past go to move forward towards a brighter and healthier future.

Harvard Health Publishing released evidence that science is pinpointing how forgiveness also benefits our brains and bodies. The Torah has been the best standard for a healthy living, and we need to learn to live it out, and not just "lip" it!

Here are just a few Biblical Prescriptions that come with our - Heavenly Health Coverage:

"Hate stirs up disputes, but love covers all kinds of transgressions." (Proverbs 10:12)



"A tranquil mind gives health to the body, but envy rots the bones."
(Proverbs 14:30)

"A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones."
(Proverbs 17:22)

As AW Tozer has states, "Always remember that God is easy to get along with, and if your heart is right, he is not too concerned about the formula. God is kind and good and gracious, because there are some of us that are just too hard to get along with. If God were as hard to get along with as we are, there would be one perpetual quarrel between our souls and God."

I encourage you that as we now enter into Passover and the story of our redemption in Yeshua, to review your full coverage and to be thankful that God will not overlook our sins, since those sins can be deadly.

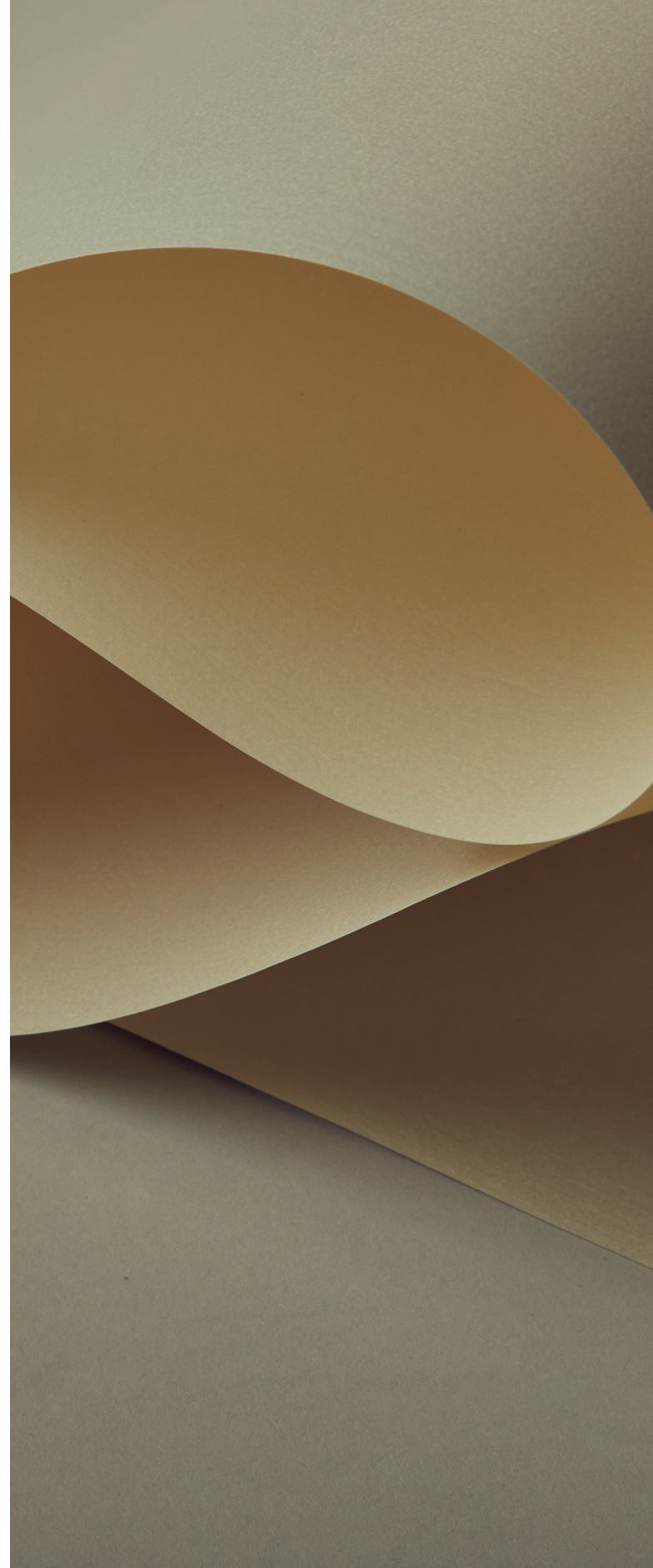
Do you understand your full coverage and its terms?

God deals with us in His love the same way that we should deal with others, after all we are his children, so shouldn't we act accordingly?

Can you remember that God is for you and not against you, and His heavenly policy is for your own good even though it entails his discipline and correction along the way?

All of God's ways and His Word is for your ultimate good, both now and in the world to come.

So be confident, secure and blessed that God's Full coverage through his Son Yeshua results in Blessed Assurance - Don't Leave Earth Without It!





“

God's Full coverage through
his Son Yeshua results in
Blessed Assurance.

ROBERT BLOCH





PREPARING FOR THE FREEDOM OF PESACH

**TROY
WALLACE**

Passover is the seminal event in the history of the Jewish people. It marks our liberation from the slavery of Egypt, and begins our formation as a nation in service to the God of our forefathers. Although the moment of the Paschal sacrifice occurred at a specific moment - בֵּין הָעֶרְבָּיִם, "between the sundown's" (Exodus 12:6) - on the 14th of Nisan, it is more than just a single moment on the calendar of our people. The moment of the Passover offering is the epitome of a time in the life of Israel year after year that is often referred to as חִירוּתֵינוּ זְמַן - Zeman Chiruteinu - "The Season of Our Liberation."

The Paschal lamb was offered for a household so that its blood could be used to mark the doorposts and lintel of the houses of the people of Israel. The blood on the house exempted each firstborn inside the house from death (Exodus 12:12-13). The death of the firstborn was the tenth and final plague that Moses, under the power and direction of Adonai, declared against Pharaoh and the people of Egypt. It was the final plague in a series of judgments that occurred over a period which scholars say may have lasted up to two years.

This was a season of Israel's liberation from the oppression of Egypt – Our God had heard our cry and seen the injustice against us! (Exodus 3:7-10)

It took time and it took intentionality for the people to prepare for liberation. Moses had to be born and grow up for 40 years in the house of Pharaoh so that he might be trained in the ways of the royal household. Moses had to be exiled so that he could develop the heart of a shepherd in service to the God of his forefathers under the tutelage of his father-in-law Jethro for 40 years.

Even so, the people had to experience suffering so that they would cry out to the God of their ancestors so that He might grant His promises and bring His covenant to life in their generation; from the time of the Covenant of the Parts (Genesis 15), this was over lasting 400 years. The freedom of Passover and the Exodus from Egypt took time and preparation among the people and her leaders.





This is equally true for us today. While we get to commemorate the victory of Pesach with the Seder meal, the Seder itself should be a culmination of a period of preparation anticipating a newfound freedom for us in our lives as we live them in the here and now. The development of the tradition over the years in Jewish life has led to four special Shabbats which help us prepare for Passover (and Purim as well, but that was last month!). These Shabbatot are: Shabbat Shekalim, Shabbat Zakhor, Shabbat Parah, and Shabbat HaChodesh. Though the themes and traditions vary between them all, they all share having a special maftir (or closing section) added to the Torah reading for the week on each Shabbat. These Shabbat's help us set our minds on getting ready for the month of Nisan exploring various themes from the Torah that remind us that our freedom also obligates us to:

(1) Give our funds to support the community, (2) Remember that there are those who would stand against us and our God, and (3) To consider that Adonai provides a means for us to be redeemed from the contamination of death.

And all of these are before the month of Nisan even arrives!

Now that the month of Seder is upon us, there is one last special Shabbat – *Shabbat HaGadol* – the great Shabbat! This last special Shabbat ties us to the selection of the particular lamb that would have the Paschal responsibility to become the sacrifice that reminds us of our liberation.



On the 10th of Nisan, we were commanded to select this special lamb from our flocks and bring it into our houses (Exodus 12:3). We take four days to inspect it and make sure it is without blemish as the Torah commands (Exodus 12:5). This time, too, becomes a time for us to prepare our hearts to anticipate the celebration of our historic liberation and to anticipate the liberation to come when the Messiah Yeshua will establish His Kingdom on the earth – Oh, what a Passover it will be when we celebrate with Him to inaugurate His Messianic Kingdom – may it be next year in Jerusalem!

The rabbis tell us in the words of the Haggadah that each of us should remember the miracles of Passover as if we ourselves have experienced them personally ourselves. It seems fitting that we should not only imagine the liberty that comes at the end of the story, but also all the toil and sufferings that led to such a miraculous moment in time.

We must imagine ourselves as the people longing for freedom over hundreds of years and that of multiple generations. We must visualize what it was like to be under the lash of Pharaoh's whip, what it was like to see our sons taken from us and drown in the Nile, and what it was like to see the Nile turned to blood so that the fish died and the land and the river stank with them.

What would we have felt as we were experiencing light as the rest of Egypt dwelt in darkness? How would we have given thanks as we saw our cattle alive while all the livestock of Egypt was found dead having been ravaged by disease?

We must imagine ourselves as those who had to be prepared to be set free because we have the promise of the God of our fathers!

And before we get to the Seder itself – with all the tastes and smells and songs that stir up the depths of the remembrances and celebrations and even the sufferings of the people of Israel over millennia – we must be sure that we have taken stock of where we are in our pursuit of His goodness in our lives today, in this year.

And so, let us take the time and give the intention needed to make this Passover one which takes us to an even greater degree of liberation.

“...where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory.” (2 Corinthians 3:17b-18)



The Seder itself
should be a
culmination

of a period of
preparation

anticipating a
newfound freedom

for us in our lives

as we live them
in the here and now.

Troy Wallace



THE LIBERTY OF LITURGY

A CHARISMATIC APPEAL



MORGAN KRUPINSKI

Maimonides, in his classic compendium of Judaism, *Mishneh Torah*, powerfully wrote the following,

"Congregational prayer is always heard by God. Even if sinners are present, God does not reject public worship. One should therefore associate himself with the congregation; he should not pray in private when he can pray with the congregation."



As both Jewish and Gentile followers of Yeshua, we can give a strong affirmation to this statement. Congregational prayer is the lifeblood of a community. God wants His people to pray not just in secret, but also with the members of His Body. We read this in Hebrews 10:25-26 (TLV),

“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good deeds. And do not neglect our own meetings, as is the habit of some, but encourage one another—and all the more so as you see the Day approaching.”

Here the author of Hebrews instructs the believing community of Jewish followers of Yeshua not to avoid fellowship and worship with the community. Various other passages support the structure of communal prayer in the Body of Messiah. Paul provides us with the earliest Covenant Memorial/Lord’s Seder service order in 1 Corinthians 11. Various scholars have pointed to passages such as Romans 1:3-4 or Philippians 2:6-11 as being part of pre-Pauline hymns.

The development of ancient liturgies is clearly present in the New Testament. The Body of Messiah was developing its own unique ways of worshipping God and was revealed in Yeshua very early on, and stands in parallel to the development of post Second Temple Jewish prayer arising after 70 AD. In short, liturgy is an ancient, as well as a Biblical practice for both traditional Judaism and Messianic practice.

The Liturgy of Israel

We are exhorted in the Haggadah during Passover to recite the following,

In each and every generation a person must view himself as though he personally left Egypt, as it is stated: *“And you shall tell your son on that day, saying: It is because of this which the Lord did for me when I came forth out of Egypt”* (Exodus 13:8)



This idea is radical. Each time we recite the Haggadah and remember the Exodus of Egypt, we are reminded to consider ourselves as personally reliving the story and remember our own personal redemption out of Egypt. How does one facilitate this? It is done by engaging experientially with the text of the Haggadah.

My wife and I always spend the first night of Pesach together with her family. Each part of the Seder has its own tradition, whether it is the table filled with plastic frogs or the singing of Marty Goetz’s Isaiah 53 right before we partake in the Body and Blood of the Lord. This ancient liturgy as well as family traditions guides us into an experiential, and supernatural encounter with the living God. I know I am especially blessed during our long Seder each year.

The Liturgy of the Church

Many in the Messianic movement are not as familiar with the liturgical practices of the Church. While most think of liturgies as being either Catholic or Orthodox, liturgies have



nevertheless been present in Episcopalian/Anglicanism and even Methodism through the Book of Common Prayer and various prayer book traditions.

Even a casual observer of the Book of Common Prayer can notice its stunning similarity to Jewish practices found in the Siddur. Daily Morning and Evening Prayer Services follow a similar pattern, with opening prayers in the Psalms (Pesukei D'Zimra). Each day there are structured readings based on the liturgical calendar (Torah Cycle). The affirmation of belief with the "Gloria Patria" vis-à-vis the Shema is not hard to notice.

Liturgy as a practice for believers in Yeshua certainly has a long history and should be an encouraged spiritual discipline, not disregarded as something non-spiritual or dead.

A Charismatic Appeal for Messianic Liturgy

Messianic Jews and Messianic Congregations are rooted in the life of both ethnic Israel and the Body of Messiah. We should be willing to freely, although carefully and thoughtfully, partake in both the liturgies of Israel and the Church. We also should strive to develop Yeshua-centric liturgies for our communities that are recognizable in form and pattern to the ones that have come before.

Furthermore, liturgy is not against Charismatic or a free expression of worship. On the contrary, it gives us a way to express prayer in a corporate setting that is both deeply communal and deeply personal. Phillip Birnbaum comments on the earlier passage from Maimonides:

“Occasionally, traditional prayer helps us in a purely personal way, when pent up emotion chokes our power of expression. We cannot speak; it speaks for us, and in it, we find repose.”

Liturgy provides us the reminders and rhythms of worshipping the eternal God of Israel through our days and seasons of life. Liturgy gives us the words to worship the One that is beyond our words. Liturgy can invoke powerful encounters with the Spirit of the Living God when done with a heart of intention, not mere repetition.

In Judaism, there is an idea of prayer with intent, called kavanah. Praying with kavanah encourages the participant to be intentionally focused in prayer. Kavanah means praying from his or her heart and desiring meaningful connection with God, often through the written prayers of the Siddur.

May it be ever more so with us, who are empowered with the living Presence of the Holy Spirit indwelling.



“

Liturgy gives us a
way to express
prayer in a
corporate setting
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deeply personal.

”

Morgan Krupinski



Our Congregations



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BETH MAYIM CHAYIM
bethmayimchayim.org

YESHUA HA'MASHIACH
yeshua-hamashiach.org

BETH EMANUEL
bethemanuelaz.org

California

BETH DAVID
bethdavidmc.org

BETH SHALOM
bethshalomcorona.com

Colorado

OR CHAIM
or-chaim.com

Florida

BEIT HALLEL
beithallelocala.org

ELIM CONGREGATION
ElimMessianicCongregation.org

Illinois

NEW JERUSALEM HOUSE OF
PRAYER
newjerusalem.net

Kansas

KINGDOM LIVING
MAMLACHA CHAI
kingdomlivingkc.org

Kansas

REMNANT OF ISRAEL
shalomwichita.com

Maryland

EL SHADDAI
escfrederick.com

ROSH PINA
roshpina.life

New York

ADAT CHAIM
adatchaim.net

BETH AM MESSIAH
bethammessiah.org

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BEIT SIMCHA
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syknox.org

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