

Drash on Chag HaMatzah 7 (Ex 12:15-20; Lev 23:6-8)

Ahavat Yeshua DC Service

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As was the case for my drash half a year ago, today is doubly a *yom tov*—literally “good day” in English, but effectively any day during which The LORD has prohibited customary work. In addition to being the weekly Shabbat, today (as far as our congregation is concerned, anyway) is also the last day of this year’s Feast of Unleavened Bread (*Chag HaMatzah* in Hebrew). Therefore today’s Torah reading is not tied to a weekly Shabbat and is outside the normal annual cycle of readings, during which these Scriptures are part of Parashats *Bo* and *Emor*. Not surprisingly, its main components are the commandments to observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Yah-a-mod, Winter bat Lamuel.

Winter will bless us with the Hebrew and English of Leviticus chapter 23 verses 6 through 8 (TLV):

⁶ On the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of *Matzot* to *ADONAI*. For seven days you are to eat *matzah*. ⁷ On the first day you are to have a holy convocation and you should do no regular work. ⁸ Instead you are to present an offering made by fire to *ADONAI* for seven days. On the seventh day is a holy convocation, when you are to do no regular work.

In addition to the historical readings for Day Seven of *Chag HaMatzah*, Numbers chapter 28 verses 16 through 25 also contain commandments regarding the feasts of *Pesach* and *HaMatzah*.

Before I get to the main points I believe The Spirit wants made in this drash, I noted during my research *this yom tov* comes with little guidance regarding how it is different from the other *moadim*. According to an online article entitled *The Last Day of Passover: A Feast Day Devoted to the Messiah!*, [quote]:

In Jewish tradition, it is believed that the first two days of Passover speak of the past redemption from Egypt, but the last two days of Passover speak of the complete and ultimate redemption through the coming of Messiah.

In my Messianic Jewish circles I have not encountered this concept. It seems the Hasidim, who have been around less than a millennium, have embraced this idea

strongly, requiring a special meal of the Messiah on this day. It is intriguing that most Jewish people agree The Messiah is not to be associated with the Passover lamb, but some accept He *is* to be prominent at the conclusion of *Chag HaMatzah*.

So much for the chopped liver. Let's dig into the *entrée*. But first allow me to state this drash was modified after I heard about Roeh Ralph's comments during Sunday's *Talking Torah* and received Roeh Ralph's email entitled *Counting The Omer* sent this past Tuesday. There is no need to repeat what was said, and that will make this drash somewhat shorter, although there will still be some repetition.

Have you ever noticed some ambiguity in The Scriptures about precisely when The LORD's *moadim* begin and end? This drash will not attempt to square these apparent conflicts as I believe The LORD wants some things far more general regarding this matter brought out today.

I have functioned for almost half a century as an IT specialist. God gave me the gifting and temperament of an engineer. You could say engineering is in my blood, perhaps even more so than music is. I do *not like* ambiguous specifications, let alone those containing contradictions. I have had to push past such discomfort regarding The Scriptures much more than I would think should be necessary and have often wondered why can't God's Word be perfectly and unmistakably clear? Were Moses, Paul, and all the other conduits of the Holy Spirit engineering-challenged?

Through the decades I eventually received enough enlightenment to mostly achieve peace about this.

First of all, what does The Word say for itself? We read its mission statement in Second Timothy chapter 3 verses 16 and 17:

¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

The usefulness of The Word is primarily in regard to spiritual matters. Many subjects are out of its scope, nor does it attempt to be an encyclopedia. For instance, The Word does not recommend itself as a textbook for Tensor Calculus, nor does it promise everything you ever needed or wanted to know about history past, present, or future. It is, however, especially authoritative regarding the Laws that were given through Moses that are binding upon the human race,

although many of those commandments pertain only to the Jewish people and some others also apply to non-Jewish people who are grafted into the Commonwealth of Israel one way or another. The Scriptures are also the only law that can be cited at the Great White Throne Judgment to come at the end of this Age.

For another thing, I began to appreciate the mystery of The Scriptures. We often are seeing concepts it presents through a veil darkly, and some concepts are merely alluded to, if not outright never mentioned, because we either have not words for them or we have no need to know about them in this realm.

Think for one hour about God being outside of *time* and you'll start to get an idea of what I'm talking about. How can one speak or even think without the flight of the Arrow of Time for the necessary sequences to occur in the correct order? Pause a recording in mid-sentence and what do you hear? Nothing—stop time and all vibrations and waves have stopped, including acoustic, electromagnetic, gravitational, and probably others mankind has yet to detect. So change *requires* time, else there can be no before or after. So, of course God doesn't change if He's outside of Time; however, it is far more likely He is not limited to one ray of time as this realm seems to be, or even only one dimension of Time. After an hour of such musing, we see, to quote Dave Barry, we have "no more comprehension than that of a shrimp examining a nuclear submarine."

Because we think we know so much more than Job knew, these days God would probably ask us questions that Job could not even parse—questions like, "How is it that normally protons repel each other and electrons repel each other but protons and electrons attract each other? And where were you when I spoke quantum entanglement and superposition into the fabric of this universe? Explain the mechanisms and need for such behaviors, you are so knowledgeable." Would that not make you feel rather humbled? And, by the way, we still can't create life from dirt. So make some room for the mysteries within The Scriptures.

Yet another area of enlightenment was becoming cognizant of the varying weights of the different commands; i.e., some are of greater importance than others. Dan Juster's favorite analogy was the Holy Spirit is like the policeman who waves you through the intersection when the traffic light is red. Although we accept the principle that the Holy Spirit will never tell us to do anything contrary to The Word, we eventually learn it can be difficult to *correctly* determine just what The Word has to say about any particular situation, leading to differences of opinion. One type of situation can render some commands subordinate to other commands while the reverse can be true in other types of

situations. So the bottom line is, if you sense The Spirit leading in a direction that you think is contrary to Scripture, you *must* insist upon a download *right now* to understand how the direction is conformant to The Word. We have been commanded to test spirits. This helps us remember we don't necessarily *know* what The Word means, we may only *think* we know. For example, one year in the '90s, I was *shocked* that The Spirit told me to go to work on the morning of *Yom Teruah* (more commonly called *Rosh HaShanna*). *God* was persuaded that my client at that time *did* have an ox in a ditch that only I could extricate within the available time. So remember what Romans chapter 14 and First Corinthians chapter 8 say about not judging another servant as well as being careful that differences of opinion do not cause fellow Believers to stumble.

Finally, I slowly comprehended that my focus upon the dotted "i"s and crossed "t"s of The Scriptures was drawing me into a legalistic view of The Law, which is contraindicated for keeping in step with The Spirit. This is the essence of Second Corinthians chapter 3 verse 6:

⁶ [...] For the letter kills, but the *Ruach* gives life[.]

though the entire chapter must be comprehended to understand just what is being contrasted here, and there is not time to attempt that in this drash. But if I simply mention the incident in John chapter 8 in which a woman caught in adultery is spared death via the wisdom and love of Yeshua, I think the point is made by way of example. So beware of legalism.

This segues into the matter of mercy. In Matthew chapter 5 verse 7, Yeshua said:

⁷ Blessed are the merciful, for they shall be shown mercy.

Then in James chapter 2 verses 10 through 13 we read the amplified version:

¹⁰ For whoever keeps the whole *Torah* but stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all. ¹¹ For the one who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not commit murder." Now if you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the *Torah*. ¹² So speak and act as those who will be judged according to a *Torah* that gives freedom. ¹³ For judgment is *merciless* to the one who does not show mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

Even with Messiah's blood atoning for all your shortcomings, could I interest you in a guarantee to receive mercy from God? Then make a habit of showing mercy to others.

Ready for dessert? Let's think about the Counting of the Omer that commenced during *that* unique Feast of Unleavened Bread when Yeshua rose from the dead,

apparently during that year's Feast of First Fruits (*Bikkurim* in Hebrew). The Gospels and the Book of Acts provide our knowledge of the events, but do not mention the day of the count upon which they occurred. That would have been nice, I think, but that data wasn't *captured* as we say in the IT industry. Nonetheless, you might find it engaging to map those events into your day-by-day approach to counting. Depending upon when you start counting, you would probably need to catch up on previous days, and note many of those events occurred early in the counting, especially on the day of The Resurrection. Or maybe you could just make a note to think about doing this next year. It's just a suggestion, not a commandment.

Have a good day.

The next parashat is *Sh'mini* which spans Leviticus chapter 9 verse 1 through chapter 11 verse 47.