

WATCHMEN FOR THE NATIONS X REVIVE ISRAEL

PASSOVER

PAST | PRESENT | FUTURE



DAVID
DEMIAN

ASHER
INTRATER

DAN JUSTER | HANY BOGHOSSIAN | PAUL WILBUR

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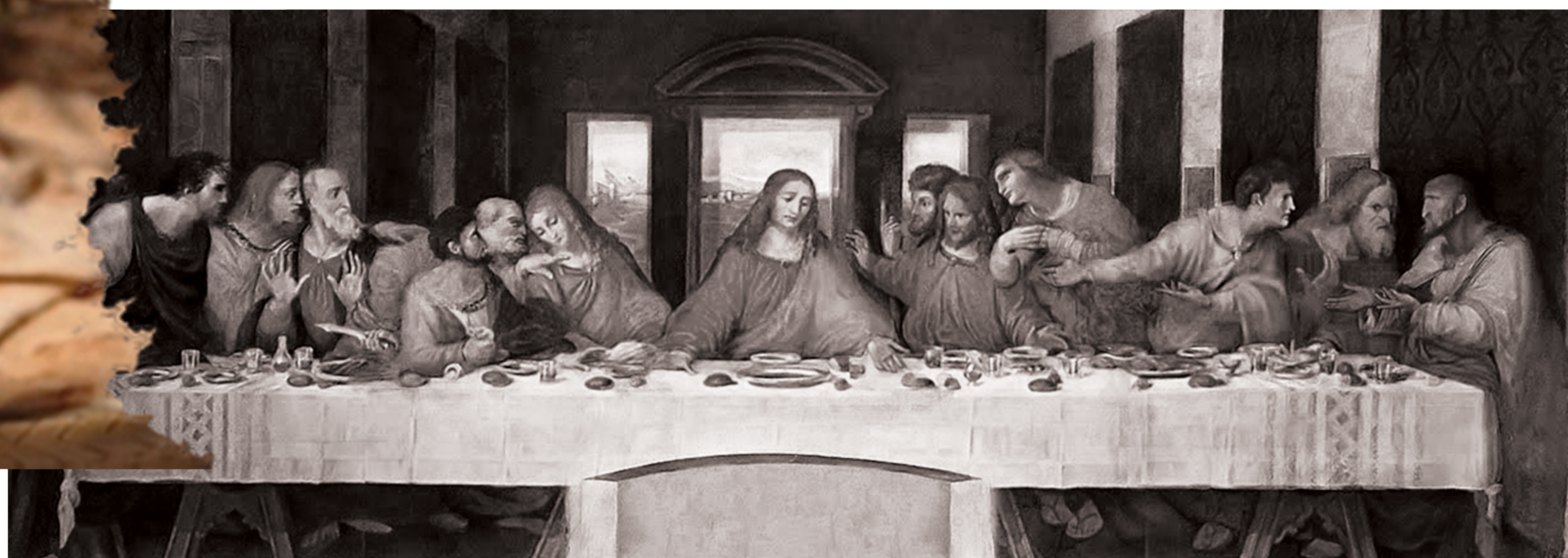


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FOREWORD

ASHER & DAVID

This book is designed to share the story of a unique, historic moment at the 2020 Global Passover and Last Supper alignment.


We (Asher and David) will give you our perspectives about what happened. You will also read some wonderful testimonies from our friends Hany Boghossian, Sister X from China, Dan Juster and Paul Wilbur.

We wanted to document what happened and make it available to anyone who would be interested. We hope you are blessed and edified by it.

There were dozens of people who served and sacrificed greatly to help all these pieces come together.

We cannot even begin to thank them all here; but "thank you, thank you, thank you" in any case.

Note: all quotations from Scripture are in the author's own translation.



FULLNESS OF THE GENTILES

———— *David Demian*

Passover is usually a significant time for me that comes every year. However, Passover 2020 didn't stand out for me as anything clear until I was preparing with our East Asian family for an online Korea Gathering.

The Lord has been leading us to gather the families of the nations strategically to prepare His bride in the earth, and the North-East Asian triangle of Japanese, Korean and Chinese believers have had a key part in mobilizing the whole global family of God. During this specific gathering, we were preparing to pray for One Korea between the north and the south.

As I was sharing with our Asian family, my spirit was filled with faith about the significance of "One Korea." I felt it was not just another step for Korea, but a historical landmark for the whole Body of Christ. As the Lord shows up with His might and power, the impossible will take place before our eyes. My spirit was filled with the declaration, "Now! It's time!"

Suddenly, as I was thinking about the concept of "One Korea," I had an amazing thought:

Could this be another fulfillment of the fullness of the Gentiles? (**Rom. 11:25**)

Could it be that this is another marking point, another level in the history of the preparation of the Body of Christ? We know that when the fullness of the Gentiles comes, there will be a turning point for the Jewish people, and they will see their Messiah (**Rom. 11:26**).

Could it be in this time the Gentiles will come into fullness, in numbers, in maturity, and in critical mass from every nation? Could it be that what we will see in one Korea is a landmark for the world to see the hand of the Lord coming down on the earth, just as the Lord said to Moses, "I will glorify My Name in Egypt"?

Could it be that through Korea, everyone will know that this is the hand of the Lord, and the unification of Korea will give a boost of faith to the whole Body to enter into its fullness of time?

As this happens, we as the Gentile church will turn towards the Jewish people—to "own" them as our people, to intercede for the dream of God's heart, for His own nation to be restored.

PASSOVER ALIGNMENT

I finished this call with our Asian family, and then the very next day I received a message from Asher. He suggested that we gather as nations for a Passover communion celebration, a Last Supper where we both welcome the global family to the covenant table as Jews and Arabs in oneness.

I already was thinking that we should have a global alignment with the feasts of Israel, so the moment I heard this, I immediately realized this was what the Lord had spoken to me just yesterday on the call, and this was not a coincidence. This Passover would be a landmark in the global Body. We would move together, as a representation of the nations with a small number of the Jewish remnant, aiming for the removal of the veil over the eyes of the Jewish people.

As I prepared for this celebration, I realized that every day throughout the whole coronavirus lockdown worldwide, the Lord was using the situation for His glory at this time to bring the fullness of the Gentiles. At the Passover online gathering, we saw so many incredible ministries, mantles, anointings, and callings joined together as one. This would never have been possible if we would have arranged a physical gathering because of the need for travel and busy schedules.

The Lord is using this season to align our spirits with the trusted leaders in the Body of Christ at large, beyond the unity we have known until now, and He is taking us deeper and deeper in it.

In entering into the elements of the Passover, we felt it was critical to not simply celebrate it traditionally, but to find the spiritual messages behind the elements always present for the whole Body to remember and join in. The Passover is not just a Jewish feast that Gentiles take part in to honor Jewish culture, but it is a part of our inheritance as a Body, grafted into the olive tree (**Rom. 11:24**) as one new man (**Eph. 2:15**).

For example, I always wondered why Jesus is called "the Lamb of God." He is represented in Scripture as a Lion and a Lamb (**Rev. 5:6**). Then I understood that it goes back to the Passover. There was a lamb slain for each household, for their protection and salvation from death. Now we have our Passover lamb, and through His blood we are saved.

When we realized that combining the Passover with the Last Supper, with global communion, connects three points in history—past, present, and future, it took us out of the confusion that often surrounds the Jewish roots movement. As the global Body, we are not called to just celebrate the Jewish traditions, but to participate in our covenantal heritage, looking to the future of His return.

When my grandfather tells stories of our family, I don't see it as his family's story, but our family, my family. The stories and the covenantal history brought by the Jewish people is our history as we are grafted in to them. It was beautiful seeing how during our Passover celebration each Jewish family brought a part of the history they have preserved so that we could have it today.

This "alignment" is simply our hearts subtly clicking into place. We are not looking for theological discussions, or who agrees with whom, but for the Kingdom of Heaven in our hearts, aligning us with one another and with His purposes.

As the global family celebrated the Passover together online, there was a huge click of alignment with our inheritance and history as a Body, and we can never go back. What we are now walking in globally would not have been possible without that click, and there are many more such times to come. Each click of alignment in our hearts releases the next one.

KINGDOM EXPERIMENT

Asher and I began our journey together shortly before the first global gathering in Munich, Germany in 2015. The walk that we have together has come into a bonding that is deeper than our understanding. As we went through our journey together, both of us were transformed to come to that place of trust and oneness.

No matter what we do, who initiates or leads, we both fully take ownership as if it was our own. This walk doesn't have to do with me helping him or him helping me. We have entered into a kingdom experiment where our presence is all that is needed to be there. My part doesn't matter, my presence matters. Even if I am never seen or heard, just being present shows our deep ownership of each other.

This is not to highlight simply the two of us, but it is a foretaste of what God is doing all through the Body, and especially between the Egyptian / Arab believers and the Messianic remnant.

When we speak of alignment, it's alignment with the foundation, actually going all the way back to the beginning. God's work in the earth is one continuous line through the whole book from Genesis to Revelation.

When we as the Gentile church join in as His people, it doesn't change the direction of the work, but adds to what was His desire from the beginning. Our hearts expand to grasp more of the fullness of His dream—a Bride from every nation, tribe and tongue.

From the beginning of our journey, the Lord put on my heart to gather the Body into a family walking in a covenant of love and oneness. There have been many steps and "strikes" (**2 Kings 13:19**) along the way, and it hasn't been an easy journey to nail these concepts down.

However, the moment the Messianic remnant joined this family journey, it created an explosive impact that took us to a new level. When you walk on a path, you move forward step by step by step, and suddenly when you turn to look back, you realize that you have reached a whole new level.

I understood that this incredible multiplication has to do with the Gentile church reconnecting with the Jewish remnant, but I believe it is even more than that. Among the Gentiles, the Lord has a very special place for the Egyptians and the Arabs. Even within the sons of Abraham, Ishmael is the physical firstborn son, which is a major role to play.

Along this journey, I always asked the Lord, "Why me? Why would You choose an Egyptian?" Then I discovered that this calling has nothing to do with me, but it has everything to do with the divine destiny for Egypt and the Arab peoples. God was looking for a man from Egypt that would be crazy enough to follow His voice and call the nations to come together as a family, in covenant with one another and with the Jewish people.

We don't know where we are in the line of God's work—it could be that I was the second option, or the third, fourth, or fifth, but the Lord was looking for someone crazy enough to say, "Lord, whatever Your desire is, You will have it." Even if the desire of the Lord's heart looks like risking our lives to get a cup of water from a well (**2 Sam 23:15-17**), we will do it.

This oneness between our hearts has an interesting factor. For example, when a man and a woman become one, there is a child born out of that relationship. When Abraham and Hagar became one, out of that womb Ishmael was born.

When the Messianic Jewish believers become one with the Egyptian and Arab church, something is birthed. As a global family, we entered into a new level when the Messianic remnant joined, and we started walking together.

OUT OF OUR EGYPT

As we were preparing for the online gathering with the global family and the Jewish remnant, I was praying and asking the Lord what He wants for this time. One evening as I was praying, I could see clearly in my spirit that this Passover will be a historic time. In the future we will look back to this time and say, "it was like our Exodus; it was as the Israelites left Egypt."

In the first Exodus, the Lord had only one people on earth that He redeemed and birthed as a nation unto Himself (together with a mixed multitude from the nations, **Ex. 12:38**). He desired this for all nations, especially Egypt His people (**Is. 19:25**), but the fullness of time had not yet come.

I believe that now the Lord is calling us, the Gentile church together with the Messianic family, out of our Egypt, out of the spirits that have controlled us in slavery and bondage. The Body of Christ will never be recognizable after this time. I feel this was a historical landmark, and we will see the difference looking back on it before and after.

I believe that in this season our understanding of "church meeting" will be changed forever. Many people ask me, "When do you think we will go back to normal?" My response is, "I don't want to go back! There is no going back, because what was is not 'normal.' Normal is what is going to be. What was 'church' was a distortion. It was like a nightmare compared to His dream. We made it hierarchical, religious; the Holy Spirit didn't have a place to move, and the bondage was so clear."

In a moment the Lord brought the people out of Egypt. I felt the Holy Spirit saying, "A nation will be born in a day. If I can bring the Israelites, who had been slaves for over 400 years, out of Egypt, how much more can I bring my *Ecclesia* that I have been intentionally preparing for thousands of years, out of *their* Egypt free from slavery mindset and spirits of bondage?"

Not only were the Israelites free from the spirits of Egypt, but they came out as the armies of the Lord, in holy array. Imagine opening the stable doors for horses to come out, or opening the doors for people to come out of a room—there is a chaotic outburst; everyone crowds each other and wants to go their own way. But this is not how His people came out of Egypt, though they had been slaves and never an army before.

If God can bring slaves out of Egypt in ranks, in holy array, how much more can He bring His body into freedom and His desire? As a body, we each take up our position and rank, walking as one unit under our Head, in holy array.

We felt that this Passover was going to be a historic one; that this Passover the Lord is going to bring the Bride of Christ out of their Egypt, their bondage, their slavery. We are coming out not as a scattered Body, but as the armies of the Lord, entering the fullness of the Gentiles.

PAYING PAUL BACK

This idea of the fullness of the Gentiles hit me very strongly because it went a long way back for me.

Twenty years ago, I was about to speak in our church on a Sunday. I was in a deep time with the Lord, enjoying the worship. Suddenly a very deep grief and literally unbearable sadness hit me. It felt as if the whole world collapsed before me.

I thought, "Where is this coming from, Lord? Is there a sin in my life you are exposing?" I could not think at all what this grief was about. I thought, "Lord, there is no way can I get up and speak now!"

I felt the Holy Spirit saying inside of me, "Read Romans 9." I had no idea what was in Romans chapter 9, but I opened it, and was astonished to see that Paul says:

"I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart" (Rom. 9:1-2).

Paul did not only say it once, but he emphasizes it many times: "I tell the truth, I am not lying, the Holy Spirit bears witness in my conscience." This is not just a light word he says to the Romans, but a deep reality.

What is the reality? That he has **deep sorrow and unceasing grief** for his people according to the flesh, the Jewish people; that they would be saved. I thought, "That's exactly what I have inside! Deep sorrow and unceasing grief."

I thought, well, Paul was thinking of *his* people, I may be thinking of *my* people. But then I realized, I'm not thinking of Egypt at all at this time, so why am I in deep sorrow and unceasing grief? I became puzzled more, and I said to the Lord, "Lord, I don't understand. I'm not thinking about Egypt, I don't feel that there is anything inside me for Egypt at this time. What is this?"

That's when the Lord spoke to me, and He said, "Paul carried this deep sorrow inside him until he died; it was a constant grief within him that was never resolved." He thought that when he would take the Gospel to the Gentiles, it would make the Jews jealous, yet he never saw it happen in his lifetime.

Paul carried that grief and sorrow for *our* sake by going to the Gentiles. The Lord said to me that this same deep grief and sorrow Paul carried, He is about to put on the Gentile church, and they will pay Paul back by carrying it for the Jewish people. The Gentile church will become like the priests:

"Who minister to the Lord, weep between the porch and altar; Let them say 'Spare Your people, oh Lord'. . Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'" (Joel 2:17)

That morning in church the Lord dropped that on my spirit, and He said to me, "David, one day I will call you to carry this." I carried this for twenty years and never mobilized or rallied the church to this vision. I shared it only with those who were close to me.

As I was talking with our Asian family about the time coming for the fullness of the Gentiles, suddenly my spirit went back to that moment over twenty years ago, and it hit me like a ton of bricks. I began asking, "Could it be that the fullness of the Gentiles has come?"

Could it be that the Gentile church is coming to a place in history where they will intercede to the Father for the Jewish people, that we would be one new man? Could it be that we will see the removal of the veil from the Jewish people's eyes as we walk into the fullness of the Gentiles, exactly as it says in Romans 11:25-26?

NEW LEVEL OF GLOBAL UNITY

During the Passover online gathering, there was a climactic moment of communion together across the globe. When I broke the matzo and Asher began to share prophetically about Yeshua revealing Himself in that moment, I felt that we are coming into the oneness of the Body globally, and there is now more than enough, far beyond a critical mass.

The Lord showered us in numbers, and this was the largest of all our online gatherings ever held, beforehand or since then. I believe we were over a million people gathered on the live broadcast (and many more since then), although it's impossible to verify the exact numbers.

The Lord brought together a prophetic council and a witness from the nations, and He said, "There is a deeper oneness that I will release." Many leaders wrote us afterwards about the event and said, "This is not the first time we've seen things like this, but that time was a mark in history, where something shifted in the spirit realm."

It was impossible to fully understand its significance, but we felt that each sharing was hitting right on the mark, one after another, and sealing what the Lord had done. I felt that in our oneness, the Lord put us together into the "eye of the storm"; into a safe positioning as a Body for what the Lord wants to execute in the days to come.

From the beginning of the meeting, when Asher welcomed everyone into the family setting, to when the Jewish families came and presented the Passover elements, I could feel the increased anointing from the start, like the Holy Spirit was controlling everything.

After the Passover elements were shared by our Jewish family, I felt I had to spontaneously respond to them, to represent the Arabs and Egyptians, and to speak in the Spirit on their behalf. I felt the richness of the inheritance that we are grafted into. I felt we need to mark the day of Passover, that there is a new covenantal alignment we are stepping into, like a stake driven into the ground—from all the Gentile church, but especially the Arabs.

All of our Arab family were attending the call, but weren't supposed to be on video for security reasons. Then as I began to respond, they all said, "We don't care anymore, we want to be on video." They didn't care to speak, but they wanted their picture to be seen, to be standing with me in our response to the Jewish people. We couldn't fit everyone on the screen, but everyone chose to be standing there. They felt that if I was risking my life to publicly declare covenant with the Jewish people, they must also be there too.

One of our dear Palestinian brothers made a historic declaration that cut like a knife in the spirit. He said, "We are in debt to our Jewish family. As a Palestinian I want to declare, the Jewish people are not in debt to us for anything; we as the Palestinian people are in debt to them. In the name of Jesus I declare this in the name of the Father, in the name of the Son, and in front of all the spiritual family."

This set a tone in the spirit realm and took us to another depth. He was saying, This is not about coming into a discussion—what is yours, what is mine. You (the Jewish people) don't owe us anything; we (the Palestinians) owe you everything—period.

The Arab family present felt that this was their dream communion and covenant, coming true before their eyes. We had already seen the foundation of this covenant laid between Egypt / the Arab nations and the Jewish people in Egypt on October 6, 2018, when we spoke the words of Ruth to Naomi: Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God.

During that time, we were in a tent in the desert, and I felt to open this declaration towards the Jewish people, not knowing whether anyone else would be ready to agree. But there was a massive, unprecedented response as literally hundreds of Egyptians overwhelmingly came running to embrace the Messianics, hugging, kissing, weeping everywhere, beyond the stage, filling the entire front of the tent.

That was a small representation, hidden in an Egyptian tent. Now that same covenant went on display, in the eyes of the nations, and the Arab family was overjoyed and excited that now the whole world knows the covenant that Egypt is walking in the spirit.

The audience at our Passover gathering was not only those who have been walking with us, but many beyond, from the other leaders joining us who invited their audiences. Movements of the world watched and took part in our covenant together, as the Lord birthed us into a new era of oneness for the Body worldwide.

DA VINCI VISION

Asher Intrater

In Passover season, 2020, Betty and I were scheduled to teach at a conference in northern Italy. I had planned to go on the way to stop in Milano to see Da Vinci's painting of the Last Supper, as I had been thinking about the meaning of it quite a bit.

Then the coronavirus hit; Milano became the second hub of the virus after Wuhan, China, and the conference was cancelled. Yet I continued to think about the painting and the Last Supper. In prayer I received this picture in my heart of the frames of the painting opening up and multitudes of people around the world joining in to the picture.

I realize now in looking back that the conference there, the planned visit to Milano, the cancellation, and the sudden exponential multiplication of virtual meetings on the internet had all been organized, or at least used by God to get us ready for what happened next.

The idea came that perhaps God desired us to have a global Last Supper celebration. Considering the capabilities of the internet, social media, Zoom, Facebook, YouTube all of a sudden, the concept seemed possible. I talked with my friends David Demian and Hany Boghossian at Watchmen for the Nations and with our leadership team at Tikkun Global, and the vision started to take form rather quickly.

We saw the gathering taking place in three waves: first, having senior Messianic leaders and their families share about aspects of the Passover. This was done so well by Paul Wilbur, Avi Mizrachi, Dan Juster, and Ariel Blumenthal. Their presentations connected everyone to the deep, historic, covenantal, Jewish roots of the Lord's Supper.

This was followed by a dear and loving response and worship live online with some of our precious brothers and sisters in Egypt. The covenantal and historic meaning of the Passover seder began to multiply itself back into Egypt and then around the world. This section was concluded with special music from a young Israeli worship leader Shilo Ben Hod. We felt the heavens had been opened.

The next wave was to move toward a live, online celebration of the Last Supper and Communion with the whole global family. Watchmen for the Nations' team had arranged all the technical aspects of the social media so that hundreds of thousands were able to take part, with translations in over twenty languages available in over one hundred nations.

Together with key leaders on the screen with us, we blessed and took the Matzoh and the Wine, representing the body and blood of Yeshua. It was if the Passover and the Last Supper and the Communion all came together into one global Ecclesia experience. It was as if all the parts of the Body had been joined together in a beautiful alignment of Jew, Arab, and International members.

It seemed to be a moment as described in **Ephesians 3:10: ... now the multi-faceted wisdom of God might be made known by the Ecclesia to the arch-principalities and authorities in the heavenlies.** We felt as if the heavens had opened even more, and a partial fulfillment of the unity spoken of in **John 17** and **I Corinthians 12** had taken place.

The third wave was to open the microphone for sharing from leaders around the world to try to hear through one another (for those who have ears to hear) "What the Spirit is saying to the Ecclesia" according to **Revelation 2-3.** The numbers of leaders involved and the varied aspects of the perspectives heard through them would be too varied even to attempt to summarize here.

These three waves from the Passover celebration to the global Communion to the sharing of what the Spirit is saying all seemed to fit together perfectly in a God-ordained way as what we had been calling: Passover: Past, Present and Future.

MO'ED: APPOINTED TIME

The Passover is not just a random Jewish holy day. It is a special appointed time that was set by the predestined plan of God from the beginning of time and recorded at the very beginning of the Bible.

There are two standard words for "time" both in Hebrew and Greek. The first is time in general, which in Greek is *chronos*, from which we have the word chronology. The Hebrew equivalent is *zman*, זמן. The second word is timing, or time for something to happen. This is *kairos* in Greek, and *'Et*, עת, in Hebrew.

Those two words together may be seen in **Acts 1:7**—"It is not for you to know the times and the seasons..." (Chronos and Kairos).

In the Hebrew Bible there is yet another term, a bit more unusual, *mo'ed*, מועד, meaning an appointed time or appointment. It is found 223 times in scripture. The most commonly found reference is to the "tent of meeting" or the tent of appointed meeting, *ohel mo'ed*, אוהל מועד. That speaks volumes about the purpose of God to "meet" with us.

However, the first reference to *mo'ed* is found in the first chapter of the Bible, concerning the creation of the sun and stars as signs for appointed times:

Genesis 1:14--"Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to distinguish between the day and the night, and they will be for signs and for appointed times and for days and years."

There is a rather startling claim here that the stars are not just arranged by chance in the sky but have a planned purpose. Actually, three purposes are listed in that verse:

1. Separating day and night
2. Yearly and daily calendar
3. Special appointed times

"Appointed times" here is *mo'ed*. The Hebrew root of this word is *ya'ad*, יעד, which means to set, determine, have as a goal, predestine, have as destination. The claim here is that the celestial arrangement sets a calendar of appointments which have a purpose of helping us get to a divinely determined goal: meeting with God.

We do not believe in mystical or astrological influence of the stars. We do believe in a biblically-based calendar.

We may ask, "Then, what are those appointed times?"

The answer is found in many scriptural references but primarily in **Leviticus 23**, which describes the feasts of YHVH.

Leviticus 23:4—These are the feasts (*mo'ed*) of YHVH, holy assemblies which you will call them at their times (*mo'ed*).

Notice that the appointed time is both the feast and the date for having the feast! All the feasts can be put in two groups, both based on a numerical system of seven.

The first group is the Sabbaths: seventh day sabbath, seventh year *shemittah* sabbath, and the fiftieth year jubilee, *yovel* sabbath.

The second group of appointed times is the set of yearly feasts. They are made up of seven feasts, three in the spring and four in the autumn. Each one of these feasts has an agricultural meaning, a Levitical priesthood meaning, a Gospel meaning, and an End Times meaning.

There are many different ways to interpret the meaning of the feasts. Here is a model:

1. *Passover* = Crucifixion
2. *Firstfruits (Wheat Harvest)* = Resurrection
3. *Pentecost* = Outpouring of Holy Spirit
4. *Trumpets* = Tribulation
5. *Atonement* = Second Coming
6. *Tabernacles* = Millennial Kingdom
7. *Eighth Day* = New Creation

Of course, this is over-simplified. The symbolic and prophetic meanings of the feast days are manifold and complex. The point here is not to explain what all those meanings are, but to point out that there is meaning to the appointed feasts. The appointed feasts are appointed times and were built into the creation in the firmament. Therefore, the *mo'ed* system must have been pre-planned by God before the creation.

The stars, feasts, and their symbolic meaning all point to the fact that God Almighty has a wonderful plan for us, which was determined before the foundation of the earth. That predestined plan was supernaturally set inside the appointed times. Amazing.

Each stage of the plan of God has a timing to come into its fullness. Each generation needs to discern where they stand in the stages of God's plan. There is a *kairos* **fullness of time** for:

1. Yeshua to be born (**Galatians 4:4**),
2. Judgment of Israel (**Luke 19:44**),
3. Judgment of the Nations (**Luke 21:24**),
4. The Kingdom to be restored to Israel (**Acts 1:6-7**),
5. The Kingdom in all heaven and earth (**Ephesians 1:10**).

God has a predestined plan for every individual (**Romans 8:29**), for the people of Israel (**Romans 11:3**), and for every nation, including their borders and history (**Acts 17:26**). Finally, there is a predestined day of judgment for all men, by a judge that God has pre-determined. He has proved to us who that Man is by raising Him from the dead (**Acts 17:31**).

In the prophetic symbolism that God has placed in the firmament, the stars represent angels and resurrected people (**Revelation 1:20, I Corinthians 15:40-41**); the Sun represents the central figure, who is Yeshua, the God-Man-Judge-Messiah-King (**Revelation 1:16**).

For each appointed time there is an appointed assembly. Local congregations have a weekly Sabbath-type meeting. For the global Ecclesia, there are the yearly sacred assemblies listed above. We are just now beginning to understand the prophetic meaning of the feasts as gathering points for the global Ecclesia family. These sacred assemblies help to reveal God's predestined plan and timing.

The word *mo'ed* means to set a time to meet. If two or more people are to meet, they must obviously agree on a time to do so. This is what the Lord meant when He said, **Amos 3:3**—“**Will two walk together unless they agree?**” Yes, the word there for “agree” is from the same root, *no'ed, Ya'ad, יע, יעד*. Can two walk together unless they agree on an appointed time and goal?

Let's walk together with the Lord. Let's agree together according to His predestined plan as revealed in His predestined appointed times.

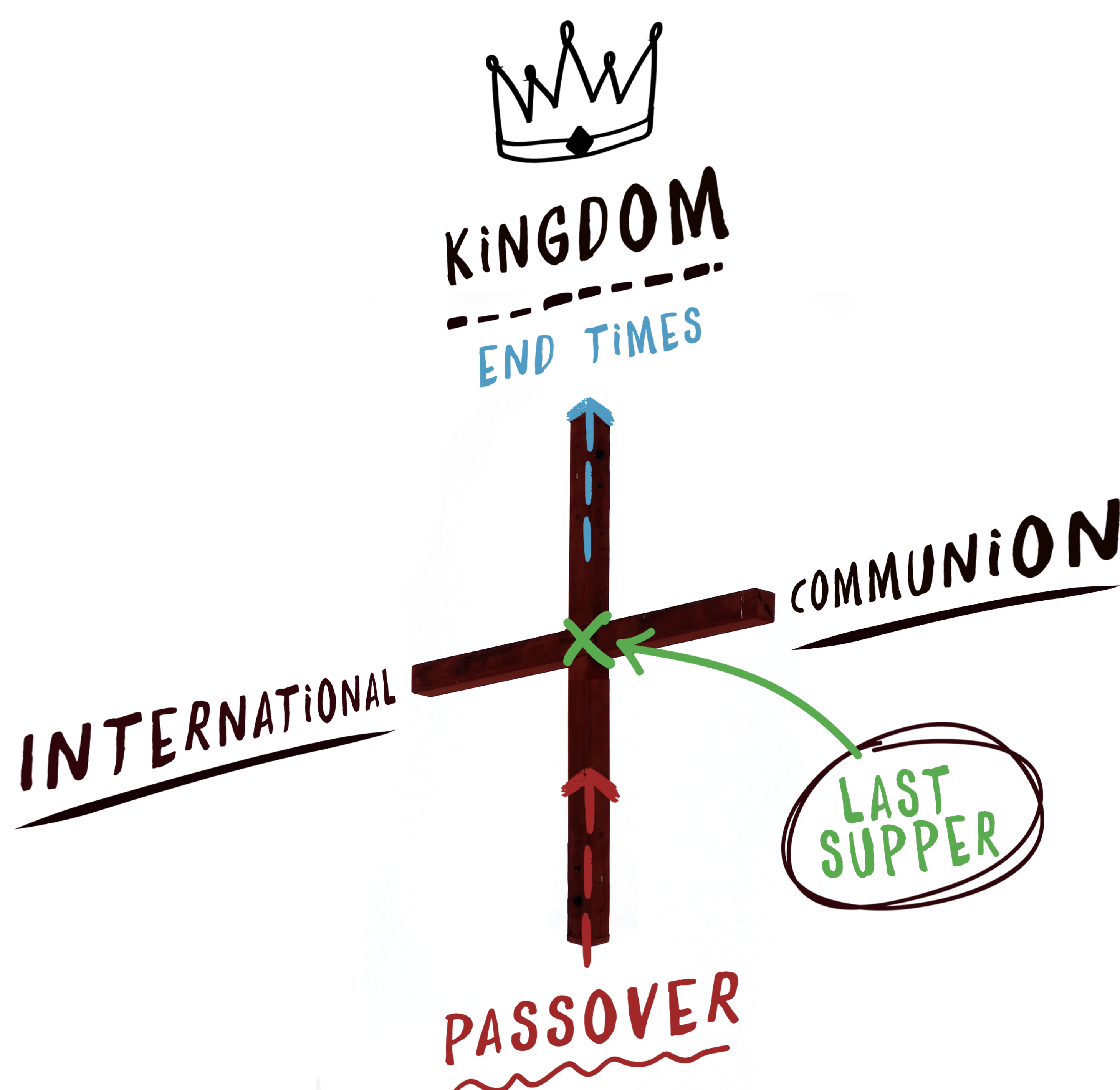
GLOBAL ALIGNMENT OF PASSOVER AND LAST SUPPER

For years, God has been bringing us together into oneness as a global family of faith with the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. We receive this vision from Yeshua's prayer in John 17, that we would all be one in God's love. We are experiencing the reality of the international Ecclesia. It is a fellowship of faith, a *koinonia* and communion that is growing exponentially both in quality and quantity as our love for one another deepens.

We are also entering into a strategic alignment with covenantal relationships between Jews, Arabs, and people from every nation and ethnic group. Such an array of global relationships could not have happened previously at any point in history.

We are now seeking to put this international fellowship in line with order of God's historical covenants, biblical calendar, and prophetic patterns. However, whenever we speak of Jewish roots, global alignment, holy days and so on, we must be careful, because one can easily get out of balance. Mistakes can be made on either side: trying to be too "Jewish" in our cultural orientation, or by rejecting the biblical significance of the Jewish feasts and symbols.

In lining up global communion with God's covenant pattern, I believe there is a release of great spiritual power. The correct alignment demands that we maintain the right balance.



In this diagram, the center horizontal line depicts our global family, the international communion; a line that goes out across the whole world. This is what we did at the Passover online gathering—over 120,000 devices connecting from 147 nations.

The place where the international communion and the Passover season intersect is in the Last Supper. Was the Last Supper a communion service or a Passover Seder? It was both! The Jewish community and the Christian community split—one went to communion, one went to a Seder, and their separation lacks the combined power.

In order to put them together, the link pin is in the Last Supper: it is both totally a Jewish Passover, and totally a Christian Communion. It's very important not to miss this link pin between the international Ecclesia communion and the Passover covenant meal: the Last Supper of Yeshua and His disciples.

The Passover and the Communion come together in the Last Supper. The two become one while maintaining their own identities. We desire to reconnect the Passover and the Communion after 2,000 years of separation. The Last Supper is the intersection. Understanding the Last Supper brings Communion and Passover into alignment.

We are not saying that Christians around the world must keep a fully Jewish Passover Seder. However, we are saying the Passover is the origin and foundation of international Christian communion. We are asking Christians to realign communion to its covenantal foundations in the Passover by understanding the Last Supper in its right context.

For the Jewish world, we are saying that the Passover finds its fulfillment in the Last Supper. The symbols of the Passover lamb, cups of wine, matzah, and so on all have their full significance in Yeshua the Messiah. Without Yeshua, the Passover symbols lack their prophetic meaning.

The Last Supper is the fulfillment of the Passover; and the Last Supper is the foundation of the Communion. They have been split for 2,000 years. Now as the International Ecclesia, including Messianic Jews and Christians Arabs, we have an opportunity to pull these two great elements back together.

This is not just an issue of Christians going backwards in history to understand the Passover. When we understand our past, we can see where we are going in the future. It's like a bow and arrow: pulling backwards is what aims and propels the arrow to shoot forward.

Communion is a supernatural spiritual experience. But when taken without its covenantal roots, it has no prophetic direction. When Communion is lined up with Passover through the Last Supper, a vector is formed. Passover to Last Supper to Communion form coordinates on a line which points in a direction.

The meaning of Passover is past, present, and future. Even the Rabbis teach that the celebration of Passover is not just to remember the past of Pharaoh and the pyramids; it is to look forward to the fuller national redemption at the coming of Messiah. It contains the future of the kingdom of Messiah.

Lining up the Christian Communion with its covenant origins in the Jewish Passover gets us ready for the events of the End Times. The Exodus story contains elements teaching us about the second coming of Yeshua. Lining up with God's pattern points us in the right direction and prepares us for the End Times and the coming of Yeshua's kingdom.

The mixed multitude that came out of Egypt (Exodus 12:38) was the very purpose of God from the beginning. He is looking for a group of people. That mixed multitude will ultimately become the great multitude that no one can count (Revelation 7:9). God desires a "special people" and a royal priesthood (Exodus 19:5-6, I Peter 2:5, Revelation 1:6; 5:10) from every nation, tongue, and tribe.

Jews, Arabs and every ethnic group are included in that "special people." Every individual person and every ethnic group has an equal place in the family of God. As the international Ecclesia comes together in right alignment, there should be a tremendous release of power. God's glorious purposes for all his children together will be revealed.

Jews and the Arabs are the descendants of Abraham. They were the first two parts of the family of God, and in some ways become the last two parts to be restored. When these last two pieces, Arab and Jew, fall into place in the global family, the picture puzzle is complete.

Jews and Arabs were enemies in the Passover story. At communion, Jews and Arabs are reconciled by the blood of the Lamb, Yeshua. Now we can be partners, not enemies. The communion of the international Ecclesia is rightly aligned when it is connected to the Passover by the Last Supper. The global family comes to its fullness when Jews and Arabs come into covenant partnership.

We believe these relationships, when joined together and rightly aligned, will release a great synergy of spiritual revival.

TWO PARTS OF PASSOVER

In the week preceding the Global Passover alignment, I had been praying a lot about what God wanted us to do, and what was the spiritual purpose of the gathering. In a rather surprising way, I was woken up before dawn and felt the Lord speak to me very clearly.

The beginning of the message was simply that there were two parts of the Passover story, not just one. There was the night of the Passover lamb, and then there was the exodus from Egypt at the crossing of the Red Sea.

The salvation at the Passover was both personal and corporate. Each family put the blood of the Paschal lamb on the two door jambs and the lintel, then they ate the flesh of the lamb.

This act "saved" their firstborn from the angel of death. Whoever came under the covenant of YHVH by the sign of the blood of the lamb were saved from death. This was the *pass-over*: personal salvation in family units.

But there was a second part to God's salvation which came a little later. It happened when the Israelites and the mixed multitude were ushered out of Egypt in one sudden action of redemption: the *ex-odus*.

The Exodus was not individual but corporate. There were not only Israelites involved, but Egyptians and internationals as well. (The whole group together is called the *ecclesia* of the Wilderness in Acts 7:38.)

So, there were two parts to God's salvation of the Hebrews:

- Passover: Personal salvation from sin
- Exodus: National redemption from slavery

Their slavery was under Pharaoh, a snake-worshipping emperor who ruled a degenerate empire which dominated the world.

(That Pharaoh is an image of the Antichrist, yet to be revealed. He was the opposite of the Pharaoh who appointed Joseph as prime minister, who together with Joseph blessed and saved the nations around Egypt during an extended famine. There was the good Pharaoh of Joseph's generation and the bad Pharaoh of Moses's generation.)

Individual salvation by the blood of the lamb came first. Corporate redemption from an oppressive empire came second. In the Book of Exodus, these two events came close together.

We have a parallel yet different situation: individual salvation and corporate redemption are separated from one another by a larger gap of time. We are now in the period *between* individual salvation and corporate redemption.

These two different aspects or dimensions of the plan of God take place at two different events at two different times.

Yeshua is the Lamb of God. By His blood and flesh we have been offered salvation from sin and death. Anyone who joins the covenant on the basis of His crucifixion and resurrection, receives forgiveness and eternal life.

Now we are in the gap period between personal salvation and corporate redemption. Why is this gap needed? Logically, there must be a longer time given for opportunity to people from every nation to receive eternal life. Why? Obviously, because God loves every person from every ethnic group.

The gap in time allows the number of people who are saved to increase. The relatively small "mixed multitude" of Exodus 12:38 is growing to become the "Great Multitude that no one can Number" of Revelation 7:9.

God has a pre-planned and pre-destined *purpose*, a "*pro-thesis*" (Ephesians 1:11, 3:11). He wants a great multitude of human beings to live with Him forever. This is not an accident or a side issue. The goal is to create a group of people, from every ethnic group, who have been purified, redeemed, and united in love.

It takes time to form that body of people. They will be manifested at the moment of corporate redemption. There is a process; we are coming to the end of that process; we are coming to the end of the time gap; we are coming closer to the time of redemption. This is the long-term goal or *telos* of God.

Personal salvation takes place at a certain event; corporate redemption takes place at a second event. In the Exodus story, personal salvation from death took place at the Passover meal. Corporate redemption took place at the crossing of the Red Sea. In the Gospel message, personal salvation took place at Yeshua's crucifixion; corporate redemption will take place at His return.

As Angel YHVH protected the people from death at the Passover, so did Messiah Yeshua give us salvation by dying as the Paschal Lamb. As Angel YHVH destroyed the armies of Pharaoh at the Red Sea, so will Yeshua destroy the armies of the Antichrist at Armageddon.

Personal salvation is given at the First Coming; corporate redemption at the Second. The Passover represents personal salvation. The Exodus represents corporate redemption.

We are in the process of becoming the body of people that God desires. In times of tribulation and adversity, we are being refined into humility, purity and unity. We want to be joined together as a corporate people as we approach the time of our corporate redemption.

By taking communion as a global *ecclesia*, and partaking in the original meaning of Passover and the Last Supper, we are entering into God's plan for us as Body of Messiah.

Note 1: Here are some of the Hebrew and Greek roots of the biblical verses about the great multitude of the people of God. Revelation 9:7 – great = *polus*; multitude = *ochlos*; number = *arithmeo*; all = *pas*; nations = *ethnos*; tribe = *phule*; people = *laos*; tongues = *glossa*. Acts 7:38 – church = *ecclesia*; wilderness = *eremos*; Exodus 12:38 – mixed = *erev* = ערב ; multitude = *rav* = רב; went up = *'alah* = עלה.

Note 2: In the Exodus there were three people groups: Israelites, Egyptians, and internationals. The mixed national groups, the "internationals," were brought into the refining furnace of Egypt during the period from Joseph to Moses. The Egyptians played a redemptive role whether they intended to or not. They were given as an atoning sacrifice for Israel in sacrificing their firstborn--Isaiah 43:3; they brought the mixed multitude together; they gave their silver and gold to finance the redemption--Exodus 12:35-36; out of Egypt came the Son--Hosea 11:1; out of Egypt came the international Ecclesia in the wilderness--Acts 7:38.

Note 3: God's purpose has always been to create a special people for Himself--Exodus 19:5, Deuteronomy 7:6; 14:2; 26:8. The word for special here is "*segulah*," סגולה. *Segulah* comes from the same root as the word for "purple"--*segol*, סגול. The special people are to be a "priestly" people. Purple is the color of priesthood. Blue is the color of heaven; red is the color of earth; purple is the combination of blue and red. The priestly people of every ethnic group will join heaven and earth in their hearts.

Note 4: "Corporate" is from *corpus* = Body

A MESSIANIC VIEW OF THE LAST SUPPER

We have already shown how the Last Supper forms the link between the ancient Jewish Passover and the international Christian communion. The Passover Seder comes to its fulfillment in the Last Supper; the Last Supper is the foundation for the International Communion. Without the Last Supper, the covenant connection between the two is not apparent.

This Last Supper also had roots in the inter-testamental purity movements in the wilderness, and to the opening of the Gospels with John the Baptist.

Therefore, we would like to go into more detail of the timing of the events during the "holy week," including the Passover Seder, the Last Supper and the sacrificial Pascal lamb. Hopefully it will provide a framework to understand the connection between them.

Part One: Was the Last Supper on Wednesday or Thursday?

There have been some questions about on which days the Passover, the Last Supper, and the Crucifixion took place. The overall view that has been common for much of Christianity is that Yeshua and His disciples ate the Last Supper on Thursday evening; He was crucified on Friday morning, placed in the grave Friday afternoon, and rose from the dead on Sunday morning.

There is an alternative view, which many of us as Messianic Jews accept as correct, in which the Last Supper starts the night before. Here is that sequence:

1. Yeshua and His disciples met for a sacred meal and their own Passover Seder on Wednesday night, according to the Essene practice and calendar (**John 13:1**--"**before the feast of the Passover**").
2. When they finished the meal, they left the upper room on Mount Zion and went down the hill out of the city (**John 14:31**--"**arise, let us go out from here**").
3. Yeshua taught along the way about the True Vine (**John 15:1**) and prayed for His disciples to be One (**John 17:21**).
4. Then they crossed the Kidron Valley and entered the Garden of Gethsemane (**John 18:1**--"**Yeshua went out with His disciples across the Kidron brook and entered... into a garden that was there**").
5. Yeshua was arrested there, probably just after midnight between Wednesday and Thursday (**Luke 22:53**-- "**This is your hour and the authority of darkness**").

1. He was taken to meet with the Sanhedrin and then early the next morning on Thursday to the Roman governor, Pilate (**John 18:28—"They led Yeshua from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment"**).
2. At about noon on Thursday He was crucified (**John 19:14—"It was the preparation of the Passover, and about the sixth hour"**).
3. While Yeshua was on the cross, many people in the Jewish community were passing by on the way to eat the Passover Lamb (**John 19:20—"The sign was read by many Jews because the place of the crucifixion of Yeshua was close to the city"**).
4. Yeshua died at about 3:00 pm on Thursday (**Matthew 27:45; Luke 23:44—"About the ninth hour"**),
5. He was put in the grave before the end of Thursday afternoon, because they had to bury Him before the Passover Sabbath began (**John 19:31—"that the bodies not remain on the cross on the Sabbath day"**).
6. Yeshua was in the grave from Thursday evening, while the traditional Pharisee-Sadducee-Sanhedrin community ate the Passover, all through Friday (during the Passover Sabbath) and Saturday (the weekly Sabbath).
7. Then early Sunday morning, around 5:00 a.m. right before sunrise, He rose from the dead (**John 20:1—"On the first day of the week, before dawn while it was still dark"**).

What are some of the reasons that support this scenario?

1. **Before the Feast:** John begins his description of the Passover, the holy meal Yeshua had with His disciples: **John 13:1—It was before the feast of the Passover...** The word "before" is the word *pro* in Greek. John is simply saying they had their Passover meal *before* others in Jerusalem had their Passover meal.
2. **Meeting with Pilate:** When Yeshua is taken to Pilate with the Sanhedrin, the members of the Sanhedrin were cautious not to be ritually defiled because they had not yet eaten the Passover. **John 18:28—They did not enter the judgment hall lest they be defiled and not be able to eat the Passover.** This is the day after Yeshua and His disciples ate, and before the Sanhedrin had eaten.
3. **Taken off the Cross:** Then Yeshua and the others with Him had to be taken off the cross before the Sabbath began. **John 19:31a—Because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath day...** If it was still the "preparation" before the Sabbath, and the Passover is a Sabbath, then the traditional Passover had not yet started.
4. **Mega Sabbath:** This Sabbath was not a regular Sabbath, but a "Great Sabbath," *Shabbat Gadol*, **שבת גדול**. **John 19:31b—that Sabbath was a great Sabbath.** In Greek this is "*mezas sabbaton*." This means two things—it is a feast Shabbat for Passover (not just a weekly Shabbat); and it is two Sabbaths together, lasting 48 hours, which requires special preparations. Yeshua was taken down from the cross before the double Sabbath.
5. **Priest and Lamb:** Yeshua is both the priest and the sacrifice. He has a double role to play, both giving the sacrifice and being the sacrifice. Logistically speaking, how could He both eat the Passover lamb and die as the Passover lamb? At the Last Supper Yeshua ate the Passover; on the next day He died as the Passover lamb at the same time the other lambs were being slaughtered.
6. **Three Days:** The prophecies state that the Messiah must be killed as a suffering servant and rise on the third day. If Yeshua was buried on Friday, there aren't enough days until Sunday. If He was crucified on Thursday, followed by a double Sabbath in the grave, and then rising on Sunday morning, the time schedule seems to fit the prophetic pattern more appropriately.

7. Double Calendar: There was a unique necessity of a double date for the Passover. It is possible that in AD 33, the Essene-type communities celebrated their Passover according to the solar calendar on the day before the Pharisees and Sadducees celebrated according to the lunar calendar. While it may be debated to what degree John the Baptist's or Yeshua's disciples were part of the Essene movement, the mere fact that there were such desert communities with their own calendars allows for this divinely orchestrated possibility to take place.

Part Two: From John to John

There were several streams within Judaism of the first century period. Among them were:

1. Sadducees (Acts 5:17)—Connected with the Temple priesthood.
2. Pharisees (Acts 23:6-7)—Classic traditional rabbinic Judaism.
3. Herodians (Matthew 22:16)—Secular Hellenized Jews in Israel.
4. Sicarians (Acts 21:38)—Political rebels against the Roman regime.
5. Libertines (Acts 6:9)—Synagogues with Greek culture.
6. Essenes (Mark 1:3-5)—Communities of pietists in Judean desert.

There is some similarity in the descriptions of John the Baptist and the Essene movement: solitary prayer in the wilderness, devotional purity as opposed to Temple grandeur, water immersions of repentance, and sacred community meals. Since some of Yeshua's disciples were followers of John the Baptist, they most likely shared much of the Essene worldview.

The Last Supper was not a totally new concept for these disciples. Of course, they already understood the traditional Jewish Passover. But they also seemed to have some understanding of a sacred communal meal. It would have been too much of a mental leap to go directly from the traditional Seder to the blood and body of Yeshua. There was a transition process that developed from the Passover Seder to the Essene-type sacred communal meal to Yeshua's Last Supper with His disciples.

I am struck by the importance of John the Baptist as the greatest transition figure between the Old Covenant Prophets and the New Covenant Gospels. John the Baptist's influence is highlighted in the Gospel of John. The connection between John and John is so clear that it makes one wonder if it was part of a predestined purpose, that John the Baptist's name was given to him before his birth by the angel Gabriel (**Luke 1:13**).

John chapter one is a profound passage in which the fullness of Yeshua's deity is presented. It is also a passage that speaks much of John the Baptist. Yeshua in His deity is contrasted to John the Baptist. That mere comparison is stunning. In John 1, there are sixteen verses that speak of Yeshua; eighteen that refer to John the Baptist, and nine verses that speak of John the Baptist's disciples leaving to follow Yeshua—the most significant of which is John the Beloved himself.

John speaks of John the Baptist saying, **John 1:8**—**he was not the Light but came to bear witness of the Light.** We realize how great John the Baptist was in John's eyes, and apparently how close they were together. The description of his leaving to follow Yeshua was obviously a major emotional change. John the Baptist was considered by many to be "The One." His role as the revealer of Yeshua as the great Light is inspiring.

It is worth noting that John the Baptist was a direct descendant of Aaron the High Priest (**Luke 1:5**). John was the culmination of the priestly line of Aaron, as Yeshua was the culmination of the kingly line of David. The New Covenant scriptures begin with the Priest who introduces The King.

The other three Gospels mention John the Baptist's moment of questioning before his death, but not in the Gospel of John. There were at least four of John the Baptist's close disciples who left to join Yeshua: Andrew, Simon Peter, John, and John's brother Jacob (**John 1:35-41**). John was perhaps the closest. He saw John the Baptist as the major prophet of his generation, like Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, or even Moses.

If John the Baptist was such a significant bridge from the Law and the Prophets to the New Covenant, he should be more important in our understanding of the biblical worldview. It is possible that John the Beloved participated in an Essene-like community led by John the Baptist.

The synoptic Gospels simply refer to the Last Supper as a Passover Seder. They did not mention the same details that we find in John. John describes the meal from his background with John the Baptist. Yeshua used the background of the Passover Seder and the sacred communal meals to bring His disciples into the New Covenant spiritual experience of communion through His blood and body.

Most of Yeshua's disciples were Galileans. Many of them believed in John the Baptist's divine calling. John was not only a prophet preaching repentance; he was also the High Priest of his generation, demanding reform from the corrupt Temple priesthood.

There was an underlying tension between the John the Baptist / Essene movement on one side (who were critical of the religious leaders), and the Pharisees / Sadducees on the other (who were the religious elite). **Matthew 3:7**—**When he saw many of the Pharisees and the Sadducees coming to be baptized, he said to them, "Children of vipers, who instructed you to flee from the wrath to come."**

Yeshua's disciples had a strong Galilean identity, in contrast to the Judean identity of the Jerusalem-oriented groups. In the Gospel of John, chapter two, Yeshua's cleansing of the Temple takes on a particularly profound spiritual meaning. John the Baptist, John the Beloved, Yeshua, and many of the Galilean disciples saw themselves as reformers, desiring to purify the holy Temple of YHVH.

At the same time, they were all still Israelites and Jews together. They were all one people and quite close to one another, as family members or members of the same tribe. One striking example of this is in **John 18:15**, where we see that John was personally known by the high priest.

This is an amazing point—a simple Galilean fisherman knew the high priest personally. The connection between John and the elite priestly group in Jerusalem would most likely have been through the Essene community. Although there was great tension between these two factions, they would have communicated and been known to one another.

The anti-Judean, pro-Galilean perspective, particularly evident in John's Gospel, was often wrongly understood to be anti-Jewish. Of course, the word *Jewish* and *Judean* in Hebrew are the same word, Yehudi, יהודי. The Galileans saw themselves as rejected and despised by the Jerusalem religious elite. They blamed that religious elite for corrupting the Temple, rejecting John the Baptist, and ultimately betraying Yeshua.

Part Three: Past, Present and Future

In summary, the Last Supper was both a Passover seder and a holy covenant meal. It was a significant turning-point in history. After that time, Judaism and Christianity split into two opposing religions. In Judaism, the Pharisaic viewpoint became dominant after the destruction of the Temple; and the Passover celebration continued with no mention of Yeshua. In Christianity, the Church at large rejected much of its Jewish roots; and the Communion lost its connection to the Passover.

There developed two separate celebrations: a traditional Jewish Passover without Yeshua as Messiah, and an international Christian Communion, forgetting the Passover meal. The Last Supper is the link between the Passover and the Communion.

It is appropriate for us as Messianic Jews to identify ourselves with this Last Supper / Passover Seder of Yeshua. In this way we can encourage a more consistent historical and scriptural viewpoint, which can be a blessing to Jews and Christians alike.

The biblical narrative starts with Passover and the Exodus. The sacred meals of the desert communities of the first century were seen as a spiritual extension of the priesthood for the common people. These celebrations merge at the Last Supper of Yeshua and His disciples.

In AD 70 the Temple was destroyed, the Jewish people were scattered into exile, and the message of the Gospel spread to many nations. The growth of Christianity geographically and demographically necessitated a change in the format of the Communion celebration.

We want to restore the historical connection between the Jewish Passover, the Last Supper, and the Christian Communion. When these three are lined up together, we have a better understanding of both the past and the future. When we know where we have been, we will know better where we are going.

HOW MANY CUPS OF WINE?

Traditionally in the Passover Seder, the participants drink cups of wine. According to different traditions, there may be considered a different number of cups. This is important because each cup has a supposed symbolic meaning. Let's take a look for a moment at the number of cups of the Passover to make some sense and order of the spiritual and prophetic meaning of the wine during the Seder.

So, how many cups of wine are part of the Passover Seder? The Rabbis say there are either four or five, related to the divine actions listed in Exodus 6:6-7.

1. והוצאתי I will take you out from under suffering in Egypt
2. והצלתי I will rescue you from slavery
3. וגאלתי I will redeem you by great judgments
4. ולקחתי I will take you to Myself as a people
5. והבאתי I will bring you to the land

While there is no mention here of drinking wine, there certainly are five prophetic promises. Many commentators see that being taken as a people unto God is the greatest promise and is repeated later in **Exodus 19:5** (as well as **I Peter 2:5**, **Revelation 1:6**, **5:10**).

Some Jewish traditions open the door of the house for Elijah to come in after the third cup. Some say that the fifth cup is fulfilled now that the Jewish people are back in the Land of Israel. Others say that the fifth cup should only be drunk at the coming of Messiah.

The earliest reference in Jewish literature to drinking wine at Passover that I am aware of is the New Covenant. All three of the synoptic gospels speak of Yeshua drinking the ceremonial wine with the disciples. Since this is the earliest Jewish source, it would be worth noticing how many cups are mentioned.

So, was it four or five? Neither. Was it just one for the communion? No. What then? The most accurate detail is given in the gospel of Luke. The answer is three!

The first cup is connected with the Passover meal.

Luke 22:17--He took the cup, blessed, and said: "Take this and share it among yourselves."

The second cup was right after the meal; that was the cup that Yeshua sanctified to remind us of His blood that would soon be shed on the cross.

Luke 22:20—And also the cup after the meal, and said: "This cup is the new covenant in My blood that is shed for you."

The first cup was during the meal and was blessed as part of the Passover celebration. The second cup mentioned here was right after the meal. That is the cup newly sanctified for the New Covenant. This "Last Supper" with Yeshua and His disciples was certainly a Passover meal. They celebrated all the aspects of the Passover; and then added another dimension. The meaning of the blood of the Paschal lamb comes to its fullness in Yeshua's blood.

Since this is the cup which Yeshua said is His blood of the New Covenant, it refers to all the pain and suffering that He took upon Himself for us. This was the pouring out of Yeshua's soul unto death (**Is. 53:12**). When He drank of this second cup Himself, Yeshua was in effect affirming His decision to die on behalf of us.

That's two cups; where is the third? The third is not yet for us to drink, but we will drink it together with Yeshua in the Messianic kingdom to come:

Luke 22:18 – For I say unto you, from this time forth I will certainly not drink of the fruit of the vine until the coming of the kingdom of God.

There is a third cup. It is not for now but for the future. We do "not" drink it "until." The third cup is a cup of hope and promise. Yeshua said He will return. He said the kingdom of God will come upon the earth. That kingdom is so real that we will drink together, eat together, celebrate together.

Do we celebrate the Jewish Passover or the Christian communion? That is a good question. Was the Last Supper a Christian communion or a Jewish Seder? The answer is "both." At that time there was no separation. In the future there will be no separation. All will be united in the kingdom of Messiah.

So, Passover has three dimensions: past, present, and future. The past looks to the exodus from Egypt; the present reminds us of the atonement by the blood of Yeshua; the future reminds us of the coming of the kingdom of God on earth.

Let us remember that third cup mentioned in the gospel of Luke. We believe in the coming of the Messianic kingdom with international peace, economic prosperity, righteous government, and true worship—with its capital in Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:1-4; Micah 4:1-5; Revelation 20:1-6).

We do not drink the third cup now; we will in the future. It is our hope for a better world yet to come.

PLAGUE

This global Passover alignment event took place while the whole world was in the throes of the coronavirus epidemic. This raised many spiritual and theological questions. In addition to its very similarity to a plague of biblical proportions, a whole new dimension of questions were raised for people around the world concerning End Times disasters and plagues. Therefore, we want to dedicate a little time to go into depth on this subject of the biblical meaning of plagues.

Part One

There is so much talk today of the worldwide pandemic of the coronavirus; it would be good to have some Biblical background to the subject. Interestingly enough, it is a subject dealt with many times throughout the scriptures.

The modern Hebrew word for virus is *NaGiPh נגיף*, which is taken from the biblical words *NeGePh – נ-ג-פ*, and its derivative *MaGePhah – מ-ג-פ-ה*, which are translated in the Bible as plague or pestilence. The word *Negeph* appears fifty-seven times in the Old Covenant; and *Magepha* twenty-six times.

Here are a few examples:

- **Exodus 9:14**--As part of the Ten Plagues (Hail), Moses warns Pharaoh of the judgment of God upon his nation.
- **Exodus 12:13**--The blood of the covenant in the Passover will protect the children of Israel from any plague or disaster.
- **Exodus 30:12**--God promises to protect from plagues the people who contribute the half shekel to the tabernacle.
- **Exodus 32:35**--God punishes the people of Israel after the sin of the Golden Calf.
- **Numbers 14:37**--The people who complained about the Promised Land after the bad report of the spies were killed in a plague.
- **Numbers 16:46-50**--14,700 people killed in a plague after rebelling against the priesthood of Aaron and the leadership of Moses. The plague was stopped as Aaron ran into the midst of the dying with his censor of incense.
- **Numbers 25:8-9**--24,000 people killed in a plague after the sexual immorality with the Midianite women. The plague was stopped after Phinehas, son of Eliezer, pierced through with a spear the couple who was sinning right in front of the tabernacle.
- **Deuteronomy 28:7**--God promises to bless with protection from harm those who join the covenant and to strike their enemies to flee in seven directions.

- **I Samuel 6:4**--Philistines are struck with plague when they take the Ark of the Covenant. The plague is stopped when they repent, remembering the plagues against Egypt, and they return the Ark to Israel.
- **II Samuel 24:21-25, I Chronicles 21:17-22**--After David's sin of pride by numbering the people, 70,000 were killed in a plague. The plague was stopped when David offers a sacrifice upon seeing the Angel YHWH above the threshing floor of Araunah.
- **Isaiah 19:22**--Egypt is struck by a plague for turning against the Lord and against Israel but is healed as they turn back to the Lord and make peace with Israel.
- **Zechariah 14:12, 15, 18**--The nations who come against Jerusalem to attack it before the coming of the Lord; and those who refuse to come up to Jerusalem to worship afterwards will be struck with a plague.

Throughout the history of Israel, in almost every situation that a plague appears, it is in response to human wrongdoing. In almost every situation, God does not deny His sovereign control over the situation. And therefore, there is a basic moral demand and spiritual challenge: "If you turn back to Me, I will remove this plague from you."

The existence of the plague is seen as a painful and difficult (yet necessary) tool in the hand of the Lord for the following purposes:

1. Documented warning to evil people of impending judgment or damnation.
2. Urgent call to sinners to repent and come back to the Lord.
3. Opportunity for the righteous to rise to a higher level of faith and purity.

This does not mean that God "caused" the plague in the sense of desiring it. There will be no plagues in the perfect world to come in the New Creation (**Revelation 21:4**). But He does cause it in the sense that He takes responsibility for His own demand to the human race to repent at all costs.

The fact that God demands moral accountability of human beings helps to solve the paradox of whether God would cause a difficult event to happen or not. God presents tests. Satan desires for us to fail those tests. God desires for us to pass the tests.

There is the question of "Why?" do these kinds of evil take place. There are two totally opposite meanings to that question, and therefore two totally opposite answers. The first "Why?" has to do with the origin of what caused it. The second "Why?" has to do with the ultimate purpose.

The origin of all evil in the world is the rebellion of Satan and the sin of Man. God has no evil in Him. Yet the purpose of that evil ultimately from God is to create a perfectly pure people who will live and rule with Him in a perfect world for eternity. God not only allows free will but, in His sovereignty, He demands obedience. He makes moral demands on people as part of His plan to make a perfect world. (This answers the classic theological debate concerning predestination and free will.)

In every trial and temptation, there is the purpose of Satan to destroy you, and at the same time the purpose of God to perfect you. The crisis is both a danger and an opportunity. An omnipotent, holy, and loving God places before us the demand to choose. He calls us toward perfection and warns us against damnation.

It is the most loving thing God could possibly do: to cause horrible suffering to His beloved children in order to keep them back from a much worse eternal damnation. It would be the most unloving thing to do to allow people just to continue on in their evil ways, heading toward disaster, without doing everything to turn them back.

Yeshua made it clear that the fact that some people suffer does not mean they have sinned more than other people. He cites the example of Galileans who were killed by Pilate and the people of Siloam who were killed by a tower falling on them to prove this point (**Luke 13:1-5**). Trouble comes to different people in different situations. The demand is for everyone to repent. The spiritual dynamic is the same for all, since all people have sinned and all people are loved by God.

The point that I believe Yeshua is addressing here is that people waste time on unfruitful theological debates as to why things happen. God's purpose is much more basic. He desires everyone to repent, and He desires to give grace to every person.

Yeshua taught that the crisis of plagues will increase in the End Times.

Matthew 24:7-8—**For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there will be famines and plagues and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of troubles.**

There will be political and military conflicts. There will be famines (which also means an economic crisis). There will be plagues (which means a health crisis of contagious diseases). There will be earthquakes (which also means a variety of other natural disasters). In Greek the words for famines, plagues, and earthquakes are *limos, loimos, seismos*.

The spiritual conflicts of the End Times will necessarily manifest themselves outwardly in such occurrences as:

1. Political conflicts
2. Military conflicts
3. Economic crises
4. Health crises
5. Natural disasters

In the midst of these conflicts and crises, the New Covenant scriptures dedicate much emphasis to encourage the saints of God through the power of the blood of Yeshua, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the protection of faith, covenant, the seal of God, the help of angels, and the love of the other saints of God.

Despite the difficulties outwardly, God gives us a spirit of victory on the inside. Every single one of the seven congregations of Revelation chapters 2-3 were encouraged to hear what the "Spirit is saying to the Ecclesia" and to "be an overcomer." It will not be easy, but God is with us.

Part Two

In light of the coronavirus pandemic, I was reading through **Leviticus 11** and **13**, concerning *unclean foods* and *leprosy*. These are not the easiest passages: the content is technical and the language is archaic. However, after meditating on them for quite a while, I realized how relevant they are today, after three thousand years, concerning the world health crisis.

Basic Hygiene

The basic point of the food laws was that there were certain animals which were ritually unclean. These animals were not to be eaten or touched. (I am not speaking of the moral or spiritual aspects of food as discussed in the New Covenant, but rather of the fundamental categories concerning animals and nutrition.)

The basic point of the leprosy (*tsorlat*, **צורעת**) laws was that if someone had a contagious disease, he had to be separated from the rest of the community in order not to infect others. The biblical rules of quarantine were severe, but they also kept the ancient Israelite camp free from disease in comparison to other cultures.

Without going into details, it seems that certain animals are unhealthy for people (**Leviticus 11**). This chapter forbade eating some categories of animal and further forbade even touching others. The latter were not even to be part of the living environment in contact with human beings. It seems to me that these principles apply in some way also today.

Most reports confirm that the coronavirus started in Wuhan, China, and is somehow connected to bats. While disease can be passed on to humans via what Leviticus 11 terms “clean” animals, it seems that “unclean” animals are particularly problematic.

While the specific topic of **Leviticus 13** is leprosy, the rules are pertinent to any contagious disease. The main points are simply:

1. *Observe*
2. *Cleanse*
3. *Separate*

These same three basic rules dominated the worldwide efforts to restrain Covid-19. Everyone was searching for equipment to identify who had been infected. Everyone was urged to wash repeatedly with disinfectant soap. Every sick person was forced into quarantine.

Basic hygiene and nutrition are part of God's wisdom. As we look to the future, staying away from certain animals, separation from people who carry flus and viruses, and regular hand washings should be an ongoing part of our lifestyle.

We could summarize those rules in two words: *avoid contamination*. We do not want weird religious legalism or superstition. On the other hand, we do want to observe basic hygiene.

Blood of the Covenant

In addition to natural health laws, we also have a supernatural protection through faith in God. Let's remember the blood of the covenant according to the Passover. **Exodus 12:13**— **The blood will be for a sign on the houses where you are; and I will see the blood, and I will pass over you, and there will be no plague to destroy when I strike the land of Egypt.**

We have noted that the word for plague or pestilence here, *NeGePh*, נגף, is the same root as the modern word for virus and epidemic. Those who had the blood of the covenant were protected; those who didn't, weren't. The blood of animal sacrifices was symbolic of the Messiah Himself, who is the true Paschal Lamb.

Through faith in Yeshua (Jesus), any person can come under the same covenant protection. By faith we can be protected from all disease and judgments. The blood of Messiah gives us atonement. If we submit to Him, the atonement cancels the punishment due to us because of our sins. If the punishment is removed, there is no plague against us.

Like any great promise of God, we need to believe in order to receive. Just as the ancient Israelites put the blood of the lamb on their door frames, we apply our faith to receive the spiritual power of the blood of Yeshua, which protects us and our families from all judgment and destruction.

The fact that we receive God's grace through the blood of the covenant and are freed from punishment from God does not mean that as righteous people we will not have to go through suffering and persecution in the midst of an evil world.

Goshen

The Israelites were protected during the plagues of Egypt. While there was darkness over the whole land, there was light in Goshen (**Exodus 8:18; 9:26**). As their communities were protected by light in the midst of darkness, let us believe for our homes and communities of faith to be "Goshen lands," protected from evil by the covenant of grace.

There will be great tribulations in the End Times, but God is able to keep us by His power (**I Peter 1:5**). We all need to grasp this "Goshen principle" in order to face the difficulties that lie ahead.

The plagues of the book of Exodus are the background for the plagues of the book of Revelation. The plagues in Apocalypse are like the plagues in Egypt. With each plague, more of the power and judgment of God was demonstrated against the forces of evil. By going through the period of the plagues, the Israelites were both humbled and strengthened.

The Seal

The book of Revelation describes two signs or marks: one good and one bad. The bad one is the "mark of the beast" (**Revelation 13:16-17**). This seems to be a technological implant which gives the government of the Antichrist complete control over people's lives. Ultimately the people who cooperate with the evil "beast" will be punished by God in a most fearful way (**Revelation 14:19**).

The good sign is an unseen spiritual mark, not a physical implant. It is not the mark of the Antichrist; it is the seal of the true Christ. This seal is set on the people of God *before* the horrible tribulations of the End Times. Its purpose is to protect us so we will not be hurt.

The word here in Greek is *sphragis* and appears sixteen times in the New Covenant. Anyone who has this seal will be supernaturally protected; anyone who does not, will not (**Revelation 7:3; 9:4**). See also **Ezekiel 9:4-6** for a similar sign in the Prophets.

In both Revelation and Ezekiel, the seal refers to protection by angels in the time of trouble. The seal of Christ is stronger than the seal of the Antichrist. However, we must learn how to receive this divine and supernatural protection. It is a matter of life and death.

Repentance

The coronavirus pandemic was only a light affliction in comparison to the types of disasters that will face the world in the End Times. At the worst of the tribulation, right before the Second Coming of Christ, plagues will destroy huge portions of nature (**Revelation 16:1-9**), and *one third* of the human race will be killed (**Revelation 9:15**).

One of the purposes of tribulation is to do everything possible to draw people to repent (**Revelations 9:20-21; 16:9-11**). Even during the coronavirus, many people turned their hearts to God in prayer. When the final judgment comes, it will be too late.

Our place in all these events is first to repent of our own sins. Then we can share the true hope of salvation, so that many others may also find grace and forgiveness in Yeshua.

YESHUA OF REVELATION ONE

As we read the story of Passover, we find a dominant figure who is the Angel-YHVH. It was this divine figure who gave all of the instructions to Moses, released the power of the ten plagues, and led the children of Israel out of Egypt.

While the events of the Passover were part of Israel's ancient history, they were apocalyptic in their size and of world shaking importance. There is something about the very nature of God that is seen in the Angel-YHVH that we will need to understand in order to deal with the apocalyptic events before us in the End Times.

I see the fiery figure of Yeshua as presented in the book of Revelation to be the same as that Angel-YHVH that we see in the book of Exodus. The connection between these two figures has to do with the very name of Jehovah-Jesus or Yehovah-Yeshua.

Jehovah, Jesus, and Judgment

The name Jesus is in the original Hebrew, Yeshua- **ישוע**. Yeshua is a shortened form of Joshua, in the original Hebrew, Yehoshua— **יהושע**. Yehoshua means Yehovah saves, just as Jehoshaphat or Yehoshaphat **יהושפט** means Jehovah judges.

The name YHVH or Jehovah is located inside the name Yeshua, even if most people don't know that. As Yeshua came to save us, so will He return to judge, make war, and rule the nations (**Revelation 19:11-16**).

When we look at the events of the End Times, there are tremendous plagues and judgments which are beyond the ability of most of us to fit in the framework of our theology or of our understanding of who God is.

There are many parallels between the events of the End Times and the events of the Exodus story. The rabbis say, "The Last Redemption will be like the First Redemption." The coming of Messiah and the end of the world will be based on the pattern found in the book of Exodus. As with Moses, so with Messiah.

In the book of Exodus, God brought cataclysmic plagues on Egypt to destroy their empire, bring them to repentance, and set the people free. God used a man (Moses) to exercise authority to bring those plagues. (The word in Hebrew for plagues is Makot— **מכות**—meaning, strike or hit. It could have been translated "The Ten Blows.")

The plagues were also described as an attack of the "destroyer" (**Exodus 12:13**). However, the emphasis of the text is that the plagues were punishments initiated by God, executed by God's human representatives, and done with predetermined purpose. The start and end of each plague were controlled by Moses and Aaron, who were obeying God's direct orders.

These types of events will return in the End Times. (See Dan Juster's book, *Revelation: The Passover Key*.) There will be an evil Antichrist empire in the image of Pharaoh's empire. God will bring great judgments to destroy that empire. The plagues will have three main purposes:

1. Warn the wicked of impending damnation
2. Bring sinners to repentance and salvation
3. Refine the saints to greater faith and purity

God expects His people on earth to be in active agreement with His judgments. We are to cooperate with God by faith, just as Moses and the Israelites were supposed to do. How does that possibly fit with our understanding of God?

We must grasp both the kindness of God and His severity (**Romans 11:22**). We must expand our understanding of who God is. In order to understand the events of the End Times, we have to understand the characteristics of God working in these End Times. The unveiling of who Yeshua is in the first chapter of Revelation *precedes* all the events of the rest of the book.

When Yeshua was born, it was difficult for people to understand that He was God in the form of a human being: in a normal, non-glorified body. After He was raised from the dead, it was again difficult for the disciples to understand who He was. He came in a *different* form and they needed *additional* revelation to recognize Him (**Luke 24:13-5**).

A similar experience happened to Moses in **Exodus 6:1-8**. God tells Moses that the people have known Him by the name El Shaddai, but they have not known Him by the name YHVH (Jehovah). He goes on to list five or six different ways in which He will act to bring national judgment and redemption, which are characteristic of His name YHVH.

We are in a similar situation now. We have known Yeshua as the man walking by the Sea of Galilee. But we haven't known Him as YHVH-Yeshua, the commander of the armies of heaven, the judge of all the earth, the executor of the wrath of God, the omnipotent and *pantocratic* (all-ruling) king.

In order to deal with the events before us, we need to have a radical change in our understanding of who Yeshua is. This is what happened to John on the Isle of Patmos. Job had a similar experience with the whirlwind, Moses at the burning bush, the disciples on the road to Emmaus.

John was shocked and transformed by the experience on Patmos. John “the beloved” had known Yeshua as his friend. During the Last Supper he had leaned on Yeshua’s chest, but now he fell to YHVH-Yeshua’s feet as if dead (**Revelation 1:13-17**). We all need to have our own personal Patmos-type experience. How can we deal with the events of the book of Revelation if we can't deal with the Yeshua of the book of Revelation?

Now is the time for this to happen. This is a critical *kairos* moment of transition. Let's read and understand **Revelation One** so we can embrace and experience the events of the rest of the book.

In the Law and the Prophets, the Jehovah-Angel appeared in a glorified divine form when He was outside of Israel, and in a normal human form He was inside Israel (see descriptions of more than thirty appearances of Angel-Jehovah in my book, *Who Ate Lunch with Abraham?*).

Yeshua has two forms: one of glory and fire; one of non-glorified human appearance. He came the first time in a normal humble appearance, riding on a donkey (**Zechariah 9:9, Matthew 21:1-9**). But He will come the second time in the glorified divine form, riding a white horse, with eyes of fire (**Daniel 7:13-14, Revelation 19:11-16**).

We have not known how to deal with a virus epidemic. The book of Revelation speaks of one third of nature being destroyed and one third of human population being killed (**Revelation 9:13-18; 16:1-9**). To be able to understand the events of the book of Revelation, we need to understand the Yeshua of the book of Revelation.

Many of the Jews misunderstood Yeshua at the time of the first appearance. Many Christians will likely misunderstand Him at the second. This is no longer a matter of theoretical theology. We are crossing into the End Times, and we need to have an understanding of the End Times' Yeshua.

Before Moses faced Pharaoh in Egypt, he needed to understand Jehovah's mighty ways of judgment and redemption. Before we can face the End Times, we also need to understand Yeshua as "Jehovah-Jesus." The mighty ways of judgment and redemption of Yehovah are also in the name of Yeshua, and we have not realized it.

As Yehovah sent Moses and Aaron to confront the evil empire of Pharaoh, so is Yehovah-Yeshua sending us to stand against the evil powers of the Beast in the End Times (**Revelation 11:8**). The authority of the name Yehovah is inside the name Yeshua. Let us resume the Exodus cry and the Exodus moment: "Let My people go!"

"TSARAH" TRIBULATION & "MITSRAYIM" EGYPT

In an address in Hebrew to the nation right before Passover and our Global Passover alignment, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu quoted from **Jeremiah 30:7**--*It is a time of trouble for Jacob and he will be saved from it.*

Netanyahu was speaking to encourage the people that though the time of battling the coronavirus is difficult, we will make it through. He became excited when he read the verse and raised his voice as he said, "saved!"

Daniel 12:1--*there will be a time of trouble as never was since becoming a nation until that time, and at that time your people will be saved.* This verse uses the same word for trouble or tribulation and also mentions that this is the time when Israel will be "saved."

These two verses are prophecies about the End Times and form part of the foundation of New Covenant eschatology. (We take encouragement from these verses that during the Tribulation, there will be a revival in which "all Israel will be saved"--Romans 11:26.)

Yeshua Himself clearly referred to the Jeremiah and Daniel passages in the Olivet discourse about the End Times (**Matthew 24:21, 29; Mark 13:19, 24**).

The word for trouble or tribulation in the verses in Daniel is *TsRaH צרה*. (It is parallel to the Greek New Covenant word *thlipsis*, used in many references for "tribulation, trouble, adversity.") The root of the word in Hebrew has significant multiple meanings.

There is a beautiful promise that God is particularly close to help us in times of trouble, even in the Tribulation. **Psalm 46**--*God is our refuge and strength, very present in troubles (TsaRot צרות).*

The word is also found in the expression for birth pangs, *TsiRei LeiDah, צירי לידה*. In several prophecies about adversity in general and in End Times tribulation, birth pangs are used as a metaphor (See for example **John 16:21; Isaiah 66:8; Revelation 12:2**).

When a "mem" **מ** is added at the beginning, it becomes a "place" noun, *MeiTsaR מיצר*, meaning straits or a narrow place. **Psalm 118:5**--*Out of the narrow place I called unto Yah and He answered me in a wide place.*

Apparently, the name for Egypt was taken from water straits in the Nile River. The ending "*ayim*" in Hebrew means "double" or multiplied. The name of Egypt is *MiTsaRayim מצריים*, the place of the double straits, or by metaphor, the place of double trouble, the place of great tribulation.

The biblical story of the exodus from Egypt, therefore, has symbolic meaning of exiting from the place of great tribulation. The Rabbis say that the celebration of Passover is not just looking back to the Pharaoh and the pyramids, but looking forward to the great redemption of the Messiah. In this sense they see the reference to Egypt not geographically but metaphorically.

The pattern of going down to Egypt and being brought out again is repeated often in Genesis, Exodus, and throughout the Psalms. It is raised to a higher significance in the Prophets and the Gospels. Both **Hosea 11:1** and **Matthew 2:15--Out of Egypt I call My son--**draw a spiritual parallel between the history of Israel and the life of Yeshua, both coming "out of Egypt" at their birth stage.

Remember that the word *mitsrayim* in Hebrew has two meanings: the nation Egypt and a place of difficulty. The parable about Egypt/*Mitsrayim* representing the place of the Great Tribulation is continued to the end of the New Covenant. **Revelation 11:8--Their bodies will lie on the street of the great city, which is called spiritually Sodom and Egypt--**is referring to the martyrdom of the two great End Times' prophets (like Moses and Elijah/Aaron) at the hands of the Antichrist's government.

The reference to Sodom and Egypt is not geographic; the place more likely being referred to is Jerusalem. Sodom represents a widespread increase of sexual perversion. Egypt refers to a godless empire in the image of the Pharaoh of Exodus.

Egypt spiritually means both the Beast Empire and the Great Tribulation. *Mitsrayim* is metaphorically the regime of the evil Pharaoh, and linguistically the place of double straits or double trouble. The great Exodus of national redemption will "come out of Egypt." What was a mixed multitude of Jews, Arabs, and Internationals in Exodus 12:38 will become the great multitude in Revelation 7:9 of every nation and ethnic group.

The prophecy "out of Egypt" will come to its final fulfillment. In the time of Tribulation, Israel will be saved. The gospel will flow into Israel from Arabic-speaking Christian communities. Out of the Pharaoh-like Antichrist empire will come redemption. The people of God will be revealed in the final Red Sea victory at the Second Coming of Yeshua.

MUBARAK SHAABI MASR

Blessed Be My People Egypt

Of course, the story of the Exodus takes place in the land of Egypt. In fact, I am impressed by how much biblical material there is about the relationship between Israel and Egypt, or Jews and Arabs in general. Major portions of Genesis and Exodus deal with this interaction. There is a "joint destiny" between Arabs and Jews, particularly between Christian Arabs and Messianic Jews.

The Bible speaks of Egypt over 600 times. The passages culminate in Isaiah 19, which speaks of a peace treaty and "highway" (*mesillah* **מסילה** in Hebrew) between them. Verse 24-25: *In that day Israel will be a third (shlishiah, שלישיה) with Egypt and Assyria; a blessing in the midst of the earth, that YHVH of hosts has blessed, saying, blessed My people Egypt, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance.* The repetition of the word "blessing" may be a reference to God's initial promise to Abraham to be a "blessing to all the families of the earth" (Genesis 12:3).

While it is not possible to determine what is the exact fulfillment of this prophecy, nor the exact people involved, it certainly involves a "happy ending" to all the conflict in the Middle East. There is hope for a positive and mutual destiny for Jews and Arabs in the plan of God.

The Family of Faith

Abraham was the father of both peoples ethnically and the father of faith for all peoples spiritually. Abraham was the patriarch of the family of God. He started alone (Isaiah 51:2). The covenant plan starts with him.

Then He married Sarah. They were two. In the sovereign plan of God, Sarah's womb was barren for many years. Hagar was brought in to carry a child for her. The Angel YHVH watched out for Hagar when she ran away from Sarah (Genesis 16 and 21). Ishmael was given his name *before* he was born. The naming of the child before birth was an indication of a prophetic destiny for his life. He was promised to be the leader of twelve tribes, similar to the later promise to Jacob.

Ishmael was born before Isaac; in fact, he was even *circumcised before Isaac* (Genesis 17:23-26). Ishmael was the first to receive the covenant sign of the Abrahamic family. God honors covenants and covenantal order. Ishmael would have had all the firstborn rights; however, Abraham was married first to Sarah. Therefore, in honoring the marriage covenant with Sarah, the firstborn rights came to Isaac (Genesis 17:18-21). Yet, the family covenant was still in effect with Ishmael.

There may be some hint of the family blessing in the Hebrew word for family, **משפחה** *mishpachah*, which comes from the root **ש-פ-ח**, from which we also have the word for handmaiden, *ShiPhChah* **שפחה**. The handmaiden was Hagar. There is a special gift of hospitality among the Arab peoples. This is a gift from God. Arab Christians have brought a warm, family feel to the global family of believers from every nation of the world.

Egyptian Empire

At the time of patriarchs, Egypt was the greatest empire of the world. Despite the petty jealousies of Jacob's sons, God sovereignly had Joseph sent down to Egypt. This brought the covenant faith into the center of world power. Egypt's Pharaoh appointed Joseph as the leader of the nation. The covenant son of faith, Isaac's grandson, became the leader of the known world.

The Pharaoh who appointed Joseph was a good king. The nation was at its prime. It had financial prosperity, a righteous judicial system, and religious freedom for the people of faith. Egypt was the most blessed nation of the world at that time. People from all the surrounding nations came to live there during the years of drought. The people from every nation were exposed to the faith of the God of Joseph.

Years later, during the Exodus, there were Egyptians that left with the Israelites, and people from a mixed multitude of nations. The Israelites and the Internationals became part of the people of God during the time of Moses.

As the Pharaoh of Joseph's time was good, so was the Pharaoh of Moses' time evil. It is interesting to note that it was the daughter of the evil Pharaoh who felt compassion on the baby Moses (Exodus 2:6). She "saved the savior" by having him pulled out of the water. She defied the king's order. Pharaoh's daughter was not the only secretly righteous Egyptian during the evil reign of her father. There was a remnant of faith among the Egyptians even then.

The Egypt of Joseph's generation was righteous while the Egypt of Moses' generation was evil. While that is an oversimplification, the point is that there were both good and bad times in Israel-Egypt relations. The same range of good and bad relationships with the surrounding Arab nations occurred throughout the generations of the Israelite kingdom.

The majority of the time the surrounding nations acted unrighteously; however, there were times of positive relationships as well. Let's not forget that Israel as a nation also acted unrighteously for the majority of her history, resulting in punishment and even exile.

Even in Israel's exile, God used the situation for redemptive purposes. And Egypt, in her sin, was also used by God for redemptive purposes. Isaiah 43:3—*I YHVH your God, the Holy One of Israel, your savior, have given you Egypt as your ransom.* The word here for "ransom" could also be translated as "**atonement.**" Egypt plays an atoning role for Israel even in time of her punishment; just as Israel does for the nations as well.

Out of Egypt

The prophet Hosea noticed this biblical covenant pattern of the Israelite patriarchs going in and out of Egypt. He described it as "Out of Egypt I have called My son"—Hosea 11:1. Matthew noticed the same prophetic pattern and said that it also applied to Yeshua's going down into Egypt as a baby (Matthew 2:15). Joseph and Miriam's (Mary) taking Yeshua down to Egypt was not a coincidence but a fulfillment of covenantal prophecy, going back to the time of the patriarchs.

It would be scriptural and logical to see this pattern continue into the future. We sense in prayer that the Holy Spirit outpouring and the gospel message of the Son will once again be "called out of Egypt"; meaning that the Arab Christians in the nations around Israel will play a significant role in bringing revival to Israel in the End Times, leading up to the day that "all Israel will be saved" (Romans 11:26).

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SPECIAL
SUPPLEMENTS

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GLOBAL GATHERING ONLINE

————— *Hany Boghossian*

In late January 2020, at a city-wide prayer event, as the facilitator asked us to quietly listen to the Lord's instructions for the next season, I heard the words "**Communication Hub**"!

Those were not unfamiliar words to me. I had heard them about sixteen years ago, when I ended up creating our local Pastors' Network website and building the email list that connected pastors and intercessors across our region--Toronto. However, this time I sensed the mandate would be much farther reaching.

By the end of 2019, I was leading the Technology Team that facilitates Watchmen's **Global Gathering--Online** series. The Watchmen Core Team was now seeing these online gatherings as a supplementary way to gather, connecting even more people across the globe, many of whom would never be able to attend a physical gathering.

Somewhat jokingly, I started to refer to these online gatherings as **Gathering 2.0**, where time and distance no longer prevented us from gathering and experiencing together what we would only experience in physical gatherings in the past.

When Asher talked to us about the **Passover**, and the possibility of hosting it as an online gathering, my spirit leapt. I knew this was something the Lord was longing for us to do. The vision was immediately caught by the entire Tech Team, and we quickly started to experiment with technology, to see how far and wide we could extend this event's reach!

The event, hosted on April 7th in English, had over twenty simultaneously interpreted languages: Albanian, Arabic, Chinese, Czech/Slovak, Dutch, Farsi, French, German, Hebrew, Icelandic, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, and Turkish. All twenty-one languages were broadcast live on YouTube, and the English event was broadcast live to Facebook. Collectively, these reached over 120,000 devices during the event, and by May 1st, there were over 315,000 devices reached. The interactions show a high level of engagement by all who attended, both during and after the event. God only knows how many actual people participated, as one can imagine multiple individuals per device.

Further, this event brought together many leaders from across the Body of Christ. Many of whom, because of the demands on their schedules, would seldom, if ever, be together in the same city, let alone take part in the same event. True to its name, **Passover--Holy Alignment**, the event resulted in an unprecedented level of alignment and unity! The Communication Hub is taking shape, and many "spokes" are getting connected. In a marvelous way, we may be experiencing what the prophet Ezekiel saw and called "*wheel within a wheel*"!

However, in my spirit, I am still longing for **Gathering 3.0!** I imagine a time when we, the Global Body of Christ, at His call, will corporately join Him in the Spirit to experience and receive His heart and to declare with Him the things on earth as He sees them in heaven!

As we see the impact of these Online Gatherings continue to grow, I anticipate seeing an increasing manifestation of Habakkuk 2:14--*For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.*

TESTIMONY FROM WUHAN, CHINA

————— *Sister X*

Editor's Note: The global Passover alignment took place during the height of the coronavirus epidemic. The world health and economic crisis surrounding the epidemic formed a backdrop to our event. Part of the message of the Passover alignment was derived from this penetrating testimony from our dear friend and well known Christian leader from the city of Wuhan, China, where the epidemic broke out.

What the government has done in terms of sealing our city, offering medical treatments and restraining people from moving about, has borne fruit. We can see that within China, this virus did not explode in the other provinces as it did in Wuhan, so things have been contained. Basically, most of the threat and danger are contained within the city of Wuhan.

I would also say that the government of China has been deeply shaken as well. From the highest governing authority to the last citizen, we all experienced the same shaking. From all aspects of this country, the reaction to what has taken place was at first very chaotic and disoriented, but things are now settling down.

The Lord is using this to train our country. Most importantly, in this crisis the spiritual family of believers in China rose up in praying, interceding, and making declarations of faith. We have become more and more in alignment with God's heart. We have been praying and taking communion together online daily across the country, and through this the Lord has turned our eyes away from the threat of our environment towards Him.

However, I must admit that to really turn our focus away from what was happening around us and turn to the Lord was a huge challenge. Through this process of God training us to turn our eyes towards Him, we feel we have become more and more humble and willing to admit our brokenness before Him.

For me personally, through this pressure, I feel like I have known God better and gotten a clearer glimpse of myself. In the past, I had a mentality where if we do something, then the Lord is obliged to do such and such in response. But in this situation, we realized that the only thing we can do is come before the Lord's presence and admit, "Lord, there is nothing we can do." There is no way we can really meet any standards of the Lord. The only prayer we can offer to Him is, "Lord, please have mercy on us."

It seems there has also been an ease to share the Gospel with people in a panic mode. Believers in Wuhan have gone out on the streets, sharing the Gospel, passing out face masks and praying for people. Even within our households, believers took communion on a daily basis, and the unbelieving family members saw that, wanted to believe and even were baptized.

Although we are already used to the danger of death, this is on a whole new level. We had to face the fear of death standing before each one, and the Lord broke through. We felt a level of experiencing Revelation 12:11: overcoming by not loving our lives unto death. What the enemy has meant for evil, the Lord has turned into a breakthrough and a display of the Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

I know I cannot go back to where I was before. I have embraced the brokenness of my heart. From the very first day of this virus outbreak crisis, I have been crying out and asking the Lord "What is Your heart in this?" The Lord spoke to me that through this He wants to birth a holy Church.

The Lord brought me to a place where I felt the brokenness of my life and even a sense of hopelessness. The Lord revealed that I had arrogance in me because I have always seen myself as a woman of faith. But in those dark hours, when I was threatened by death, I realized that I actually had little faith. I only had one prayer that I repeatedly cried out to the Lord: "Lord, save me! Lord, save me!"

And then the Lord ushered me deeper into another area of brokenness. I found myself thinking in my head, "What can we do to appease God? What can we do to turn His anger, so that the judgement in this virus would turn, and we will make it through?" I was feeling that if I prayed more, fasted more, repented more, I could bring a quick end to this situation.

Yet, as the days went by, I realized that it was not taking place according to what I had thought. When I realized that I had nothing else I could do except to be stuck at home, I was meeting with God only reluctantly. In a time and a place where I felt such discouragement and disappointment, the Lord spoke to my heart.

In Romans 11:34, the Lord says, "Who has been My counsel?" He asked me that question, and a deep spirit of repentance came over me. I felt repentant because often I had been in a place where I thought I could give counsel to the Lord. He revealed to me that He could have done everything by Himself. Just like in the time of Exodus, it wasn't because the Hebrew nation was doing anything excellent or worthy of deliverance, but God acted according to His own will.

From that day on, after I repented, I came to a ceasing of my striving and trying my best. I told the Lord, "Father, I am going to let go of everything. However this ends, I am going to accept it." When I finally declared this letting go, I then suddenly felt a sense of peace and stillness.

After so many days of Wuhan having gone through these trials, I know that the Lord used the means of taking us to confront our deepest brokenness in order to raise up a Church that would be holy. He used this extended period of trials to confront the struggle in my heart. He broke that sense of personal strength that I had within me. I felt that He simplified my spirit and purified what is in my spirit. I felt how His love is so deep, and He is never giving up on us.

This Church that He is bringing to a place of holiness is a Church that has no dependency on anything of herself but in full submission and dependence on Him. This big transformation in my heart means my heart can be at peace to accept how things unfold in His will. Even though this process was so deeply, tremendously painful, yet I am so thankful at this moment.

I am so thankful and grateful to Him that He broke me down the way He did, so that I can now enter into a deeper trust in Him with all my heart and will. I thank Him for having shaken things up in a way that He then purified and cleansed me. I have entered into a deeper, proper fear of Him. I want to give thanks to Him for all that He has done.

PASSOVER AND THE BOOK OF REVELATION

————— *Dan Juster*

It was a great privilege for me to be part of the Passover Alignment world convocation coordinated by Asher Intrater and David Demian. So many wonderful leaders participated. It was amazing! We are standing together for world revival, harvest, and the salvation of Israel.

Our presentation on Passover was not intended to foster a responsibility among Christians to keep the exact days on the Biblical calendar, but to know the meaning of the Feast and what happened during the days of Moses, how it was fulfilled in the New Testament period, and then what is yet to be fulfilled in the last days before the return of the Lord.

For us, as Messianic Jews, the center of Passover is the death of Yeshua as our Passover Lamb. Then First Fruits during Passover week is the time of His resurrection. Since the center is in His sacrifice for us, the central celebration we foster is the Lord's Supper or Communion which is to be understood in the context of Passover.

My part in this event was to bring out the eschatological or Last Days meaning of the plagues in the Book of Revelation as foreshadowed in the Book of Exodus. The Book of Revelation is an amazing text that tracks with the events of the first Passover and the exodus of Israel from Egypt. The book is applicable to believers in every age, especially when engaged in intense spiritual battle. However, the book will be the most relevant to those who will be in the last battles just before the Lord returns.

After a revelation of the glory of our risen Lord and Messiah, John is given exhortation for the churches of Asia Minor. In these exhortations there are three parts. The first is a call to passionate love for Jesus. We are not to allow our love to grow cold or lukewarm. Secondly, we are to maintain moral purity and not allow for the immorality of Jezebel. And last, we are to be true to the foundational teachings of the Apostles. These foundations must be maintained if we are to succeed in the battles of the Last Days.

There are many parallels between the Book of Revelation and the story of the exodus. Here are a few of the main points:

- The Book of Revelation shows us that the World will become like Egypt.
- It will be ruled by a last days Pharaoh, the Antichrist.
- There will be false signs and wonders as was the case with Pharaoh's magicians. However, these false signs will be much greater than anything performed by Pharaoh (Rev. 13).
- God's people and their prophets will be more than a match for these evil ones.
- Revelation chapter 7 shows us that there will be a large harvest of Jewish people who will be sealed or protected as Israel was protected during the plagues in Egypt.
- There will also be a pure people from all nations that will come out of tribulation. (Rev. 7:9)
- We see this great harvest and an eternal Gospel preached with great effect to the nations (Rev. 14:6,7)
- Two great prophets are especially singled out in Revelation 11, who like Moses and Aaron can call down the judgement plagues of God on the world.
- The plagues of God on the world progress through the trumpet judgments unto the bowls of wrath.
- Revelation 11 also tells us that Jerusalem, prophetically called Sodom due to evil rebellion, will turn to the Lord after the two prophets are raised from the dead. Jerusalem then gives glory to God.
- This turning of Jerusalem to Yeshua will lead rapidly to the conclusion of the Last Days in the return of the Lord.

We even see a connection to what has come to be known as the Rapture. Just as Israel escaped Egypt and then went on to the promised land, the end of the tribulation of those days will eventuate in the return of the Lord, our meeting him in the air if we are still alive, and the resurrection of the saved who have died. The Book of Revelation describes a time of great spiritual warfare, great revival, great harvesting, and ultimate victory.

THE JOY SET BEFORE HIM

————— *Paul Wilbur*

The Global Alignment Passover of 2020 will be remembered as very unique in the history of celebrations. First, because of the coronavirus, much of the world was sequestered in their own homes, unable to even cross the street to share the table with immediate family. Therefore, there was a sense of restoring local family homes as the center of all our activities and our faith.

Secondly, because of the deep presence of the Holy Spirit in our midst, and because of a certain prophetic connection between us, we all experienced our unity and identity as the international family of God. So, we were both local individual families in separate homes and an international Ecclesia family through digital communication.

We saw perhaps for the first time, heaven's intended use for the internet as we lifted up our hearts and prayers together in thanksgiving for the table of the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. It is staggering to know that approximately 500,000 people from more than 120 nations "sat together" to remember the Lord's Supper and share His body and blood of the New Covenant ... all at the exact same time!

We witnessed the restoration of the family of Abraham as an Egyptian Arab Christian and an Israeli Jewish Believer sat together and invited the whole Body of Christ to eat and drink at this table of peace. The impression of this demonstration of God's faithfulness across the generations will remain in my heart forever.

In addition, I felt we experienced a bit of what is written in Hebrews 12:2:

“Let us fix our eyes on Yeshua, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

This is the joy that was set before Him: seeing His spiritual family from all over the world, sitting at the table together with Him, and loving one another with true and sincere hearts.

Truly, this was a Passover like no other, and I believe the world will never be the same.

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