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Favor Zion Ministries

May 2007/Sivan5767

Shalom Haveirim
Blessings to **you**, my friends

With the joys and flavors of Passover and the celebration of First Fruits past, we are now in the “waiting and counting” mode of the 49 Days until Pentecost-Shavuot.

During the Passover Season I was blessed to share at seven Seders (and I certainly ate my share of horseradish (moror- bitter herb). As I tell Seder participants- each Seder is different- like snowflakes! Each one has a different emphasis and “tom” or taste- feel to it. Each one is as unique as the people who attend and the leaders who prepare.

Of course, the Last Supper, which was Jesus’ last Seder, was truly unique- for it was in that Upper Room, where Messiah shared that the “bread of affliction” which our forefathers ate as they came out of Egypt, was now and forever transformed into His Body.

Likewise, after the meal He took the cup of redemption and fulfilled Jeremiah’s prophesy by “making a New Covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah”. This New Covenant differed from the one made by YHVH when He led our parents out of slavery in Egypt. The people broke the old covenant - even though Yahweh was faithful to them. This New Covenant was to be sealed by the blood of the sinless Lamb of God who promised, “ He would forgive our iniquity and remember our sins no more”. (See Jeremiah 33:31-34)

Passover in Your Congregation or Home Fellowship

I so enjoy Passover. I hope that your Pesach was richly meaningful and that the taste of the “afikomen” lingers. If you or your congregation didn’t celebrate this year, please contact **Favor Zion** because we would love to come and be with you- but choice dates do fill up way in advance!

This year because of my schedule (which I will explain later), Martin Kaiser who travels with me, conducted a Seder on behalf of the ministry, by himself- with the grace of Abba. Until now Martin has been a blessing by assisting the hosting congregations and me. We spoke this year at a convention of Pastors where I did

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a Seder and Martin in a separate session related how Yeshua is our Bridegroom using examples and insights from his own courtship and marriage.

Pentecost/Shavuot

Shavuot or the Feast of Pentecost occurs fifty days after Resurrection Sunday or the Feast of First Fruits. Now we know that Yeshua fulfilled this feast, because He is the first fruit of many brethren to **rise from the dead**. Jesus rose on the day after Sabbath conquering not only sin, but also death. Jesus' death, burial, descent and resurrection holds the promise that we too will be with Him.

Pentecost will be celebrated this year the last week of May. On Pentecost – or in Hebrew, Shavuot, Jewish tradition asserts that Moses received the Torah. So we see how Jesus really came to bring fulfillment to the Torah.

(In fact my son-in law Eric believes (with some good Scriptural evidence) that Jesus' death was at the time that the Lamb's for Passover were being slaughtered! Eric and I have been staying up past midnight lately going over Scriptures and translations and historical records: he also believes that Yeshua entered Jerusalem on the 10th day of Nissan- the day on which the lambs were brought into the city- and the day on which Moses in Egypt had instructed the people to take a lamb and bring it into the house and examine it! Have any of you studied this? If so please let us know your insights and revelations!)

The disciples of Jesus were all together in one accord in one place when the day of Shavuot had fully come. (See Acts 2:1-47) They had come together as prescribed in Torah, to count off the days between Passover and Shavuot. What does "fully come" mean? Pentecost was a holy observance. It was a day that the Jewish disciples of Jesus were anticipating. But, this year, the year of Jesus' resurrection and ascension, it would be different. Out of the upper room would come a Holy Spirit explosion that initiated the Jewish beginnings of the church.

Ultra-Orthodox Came to Faith in Messiah

First of all everything happens in Jerusalem! That's Israel, folks. All of the action is happening right at the center of the Jewish nation. The disciples, of course were all Jewish- but so were all the people in the street, who heard them speaking in other languages! The Scripture records these were *devout men-read **Ultra- Orthodox Jewish people***- who had made one of the three required pilgrimages back to the place of God's choosing- Jerusalem- and had gathered on a Levitical Holy Day at the prescribed time near the Temple, when they heard a commotion. What a commotion it was. Unlearned, unschooled, fisherman, tax collectors and those considered by the world around to be not very wise or noble- are in the streets of Jerusalem speaking a myriad of foreign languages- and each one praising God- glorifying His wonderful works! WOW!

So these Ultra Orthodox Jewish pilgrims needed Peter to explain to them what was happening. Peter, filled with the power of the Ruach-Holy Spirit of God, began telling them about Jesus and what they needed to do to be saved! And these Ultra Orthodox Jews gave their hearts to Yeshua, began following Messiah, and were baptized in His name on the day of Shavuot- Pentecost! Certainly the Day of Pentecost had fully come! In fact if I might borrow a tongue-in-cheek joke from my long-time partner of Messianic Minutes, Jeffrey D. Miller, “the first Pentecostals were Jews!”

The Power of God to Salvation to ALL Who Believe

Peter in his Spirit-led sermon went on to say (concerning the gift of the Holy Spirit), “this promise is to you and your children **and to all who are afar off**, as many as the Lord our God will call” (Acts 2:39)

I am emphasizing that this gift of the Holy Spirit is not only to the Ultra-Orthodox Jewish people who heard Peter, and not only to their children or descendants, but the promise is also to those who **are afar off**, because this is the ultimate fulfillment of Shavuot- Pentecost. The Greek word for **afar off** is Makron, the same word used in Acts chapter 2 and in Ephesians 2:17. *“And He (Yeshua) came and preached glad tidings of peace to you who were afar off and peace to those who were near.”*

Remember Yeshua is our peace- our Shalom and has made us one and has created in Himself one new man because He came **preaching peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near**. Out of two peoples, Jews and Gentiles, God forms one Body. *“For He is our peace. He has made us both (Jew and Gentile) one body and has broken down the hostile dividing wall between us.”* Ephesians 2:14

Lessons from Ruth

On Shavuot in synagogues around the world and on the Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem the entire book of Ruth is read. Now Ruth is a great love story, and a splendid example of faithfulness and covenant. But let’s look at it from the eyes of Pentecost. Ruth the Moabites with her mother-in-law, Naomi, comes back to Israel. Moabites were particularly singled out and excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and worship with God’s people. Yet Ruth clings to Naomi and decides to follow the one true God. She shows her continued covenant faithfulness to her new people. In a dramatic and romantic way, a Jewish man, Boaz - redeems Ruth, a Gentile, and they marry.

That would be splendid enough- but there’s more! From the union of Ruth and Boaz came an amazing lineage- King David and ultimately the earthly parents of

Messiah! When Jew and Gentile come together – the Kingdom of God comes to earth!

And there's more: In Leviticus on this Holy Day of Pentecost the High Priest brings an offering to the Temple made *with leaven*. Now you remember from Passover that leaven is a symbol for sin and in fact the Bible specifically says not to bring an offering to the Lord made with leaven- Leviticus 2:11.

But this special Pentecost Offering consisted of two loaves baked with leaven, which the priest held together and waved before Adonai. Why? Because these two loaves together represent The Church- sinful Jewish people together with sinful Gentile people – now redeemed and made whole, now saved and made one – together serving God and advancing His Kingdom!

Fulfillment

Joy unspeakable and full of glory! And this is what we see fulfilled on Pentecost. That the Kingdom of our God is breaking through- though not fully manifest. This is what ***Favor Zion Ministries*** is all about. We are trumpeting God's plan for the times in which we live! We are teaching and preaching the unity of the Body of Messiah and the power of God when we come with open ears to hear His voice and to do his will. I thank you all so much for your partnering with us! Together, we truly are fulfilling the prophecy of Psalm 102: Now is the time to Favor Zion!

On a personal note, one reason my schedule was overflowing during March and April as stated above, was the illness and subsequent death of my mother-in-law, Bunny Kray, (of blessed memory) in March. We traveled to Charlottesville VA every weekend after she became more ill. The memorial service was held April 14 and a final service will be at Arlington National Cemetery in June. Diane and I thank you for your prayers and support during this time.

At the Memorial Service Diane delivered a sweet eulogy, which really captured her mom's gentleness, her love for God, and her appreciation of His creation. Her mom was Past President of the local garden club and an expert gardener. When confronted by a pokeweed in her garden, she decided that its form, beauty and uniqueness merited a place in the row and not a knee-jerk weeding. Diane used that insight to exhort the congregation to be open to some of Abba's more unique people, who might be considered "weeds" by some, but have a majesty and beauty waiting to be discovered. Diane wove the story and exhortation into a touching and empowering remembrance. A man, who introduced himself as a writer from Rolling Stone Magazine, came up to her afterward to say how the simple beauty of the story had deeply touched him. What I liked so much about the way Diane spoke was that the message was so easily grasped- and remembered! Diane said that her mom's last insights were

that in this life loving God and the relationships we have with people was what mattered. The “stuff and things” we accumulate were of significantly less importance.

Please continue to pray for Diane, and for her dad. For those of you who have had to bury a parent, please pray that she'll be comforted with the Comfort, which you've experienced. Yeshua is truly a very present help in times of trial!

Next Year In Jerusalem

I will close with just a note about our next Israel trip. Our long-time friend and co-worker, the psalmist, Terry Land, has teamed up with us in planning our next visit to The Land. We will be going late summer of 2008! This gives you all plenty of time to plan and save your shekels so you can join with us. Terry will be bringing his guitar. We'll be seeing where Jesus walked and where He is walking now in Israel amongst Jewish and Arab Believers. We'll have more details very soon, but just drop us a note if you sense a leading of the Lord. Next Year in Jerusalem!

Blessings to you,
In Messiah's love

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Gifts Now & Gifts Later

PS. Please consider a gift this month to Favor Zion ministries and putting a codicil on your Will to help the ministry continue after you're promoted to Glory. Leaving a percentage of your Estate or a fixed amount to Favor Zion in your Will is easy, and a significant way to advance Yeshua's Kingdom. Contact us for details or speak with your personal attorney!