

**Favor Zion Ministries**  
**“Now is the set time to Favor Zion”–Psalm 102:13**

March 2008  
Adar I –Adar II

Shalom Havereim- Peace and Joy, Fullness, Godliness with Contentment  
To YOU, my friends,

**In this world you will have trials (and troubles) but be of good cheer- I have overcome the world- Yeshua (John 16:3)**

**We war not against flesh and blood, but against powers and principalities- Rav Shaul (Ephesians 6:12)**

As I write to you this month two things are going on inside me, I am blessed in my Spirit with the joy of the Lord, and yet I am vexed with sadness and anger.

Let me explain:

The joy of the Lord is my strength giving me an overwhelming spiritual sense of victory and anticipation. The prayer which we pray at the end of Messianic Minutes is the Aaronic Benediction (Numbers 6:24-26), which include these words: y'air Adonai panov elecha- “May the LORD lift up His face and shine His countenance upon you”. These comforting words are being lived out in my life.

The words give me a sense of His smile toward me. What more could someone want- than the smile of Abba! There is unconditional love in His smile even when I fall short of His glory. The awareness of my sin brings immediate repentance because a Holy God does not countenance sin. Being loved and accepted by Abba gives me calming reassurance. I did not earn His love through good works or any performance thing. God's free love to me and everyone is felt through this Aaronic Benediction prayer that was given by the priests. I can agree with His Word that the lines have fallen to me in pleasant ways (Psalm 16:6). There is a mounting sense of Shalom. This is the same Shalom that I pray for you, my friends.

So why am I also vexed and angry? First, I'll address what caused the anger.

It involves the inability to stay faithful to Biblical timetables. Jeff and I have just finished recording *Messianic Minutes* for March and April. We try to stay relevant to God's chosen festivals, current events and especially to the Levitical calendar. This year we ran into huge problems that have been created by *man*.

## Importance of Passover

Each year on the program we stress the importance of celebrating Passover. Passover is always celebrated as the Biblical first month in the spring. This year Passover falls on April 20.

The entire celebration is outlined in Leviticus 23:4-14. There the remembrance of leaving Egypt and slavery, deliverance by the blood of the lamb and the eating of unleavened bread for seven days is summarized. The final week of Yeshua's earthly ministry revolved around the Passover. Jesus *is* our Passover Lamb. In fact, when John saw Jesus come down to the Jordan for His Mikveh (Baptism), John said: "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." (John 1:29)

As John said these words he was prophetically proclaiming Jesus' ministry. The Jewish people who gathered at the Jordan River were familiar with the Passover. They knew about sacrificing lambs. They knew that the lambs born in Bethlehem would be brought to Jerusalem and sacrificed taking the punishment which they deserved- punishment of death for their sins.

During the week *prior* to his death and resurrection Jesus himself said to his disciples, "I desire to eat this Passover with you". And eat the Passover He did. In fact Yeshua's very act of keeping the Passover fulfilled the requirements of the Torah. The celebration of Passover, unleavened bread and first fruits, all find their completion in the account of the Last Supper, followed by the crucifixion and resurrection of our LORD.

The chronology is not only logical, it's vital to see the whole picture and gain a true understanding. But this year- because of the traditions of men- the whole Biblical picture is muddled, and in fact turned upside down!

## Complications in Keeping the Levitical Calendar

A special council of Christian leaders was called in 327. The first Council of Nicea was convened to bring unity to what was now the official church of the Roman Empire. Instead of being true to the historical and Levitical context, the Council decided that the Resurrection Celebration should no longer be celebrated during Passover week. What resulted is a religion far removed from Biblical truth, including deliberately distancing the western church from its Jewish heritage by ignoring the Jewish roots of the faith. The decision meant that Easter would be celebrated on the first Sunday following the full moon after the spring equinox; thereby merging paganism and historical faith.

This year Easter falls on March 23<sup>rd</sup> and Passover falls on April 20. This puts Passover way out of context of Holy Week. The root of this practical problem is

that the Biblical calendar is based on the cycles of the moon, while the Roman calendar used by us in the West is based on the earth's revolution around the sun. The moon circles the earth every 29½ days or so and the Bible calls that a month. But the earth circles the sun every 365¼ days to complete a year, To reconcile the earth's position around the sun and to make sure that the seasons don't slowly creep backward, the Biblical calendar adds a leap month, seven times every nineteen years. This year we are adding a leap month-thus at the top of this letter we have written Adar I and Adar II.

### **Purim Celebration Also Affected**

Now the Feast of Purim from the Book of Esther always comes during the month of Adar and is celebrated in Adar II (March). Esther is of course one of our favorite Biblical characters and along with her Uncle Mordechai is used by God to bring salvation to all of the Jewish people of the Persian (Iranian) Empire stretching from India to Ethiopia.

Some of the best lines from the Bible come out of this story including Mordechai's famous admonition to Esther: "If you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place...but who knows whether you have come into the Kingdom for such a time as this". (Esther 4:14) and Esther's courageous and wise response: "Gather all the Jews and fast for me, and I and my maids will fast for three days, and I will go to the king- which is against the law- and if I perish, I perish."(Vs: 16)

Neither Esther nor Mordechai perished, in fact the wicked Haman, the descendant of Agag and all those who wished to destroy God's Covenant people were wiped out. The events of "Purim" laid the groundwork for the reestablishment of biblical practices in Jerusalem and ultimately for the birth of Messiah. Had Purim not occurred and had Haman succeeded in annihilating all of the Jews as he planned, then there would have been no Mary or Joseph or Jesus. But, because of Abba's hand in our lives, because the smile of His countenance upon Mordechai and Esther a new day of celebration was established.

Purim always occurs about a month before Passover. This year Purim begins Friday evening, March 21. That seems okay until you notice that March 21 is also the day the western church is remembering "Good Friday." So, while Purim is a joyous and tumultuous feast celebration- with giving of gifts, merriment and often a carnival-like atmosphere, Good Friday, the day of Yeshua's crucifixion, is often marked by solemn observances and prayer vigils.

This total cultural 'oil and vinegar' type situation causes conflict because it separates the church from its Biblical heritage, and the true portrayal of Biblical events. It also has made it very difficult in the sequencing of *Messianic Minutes*.

Another part of the Biblical heritage that is tampered with is the “Feast of First Fruits”, which is a holiday observed on the “day after the Sabbath”- on Sunday of Passover week. “Bring a sheaf of the first fruits to the priest, who shall wave it before the Lord. On the day after the Sabbath he shall wave it. (Vs. 9-11).” Why is the day of first fruits important? It is important because Jesus is the “First fruit of many brethren to rise from the dead“.

So the western church by divorcing itself of its Jewish roots has separated itself from the fulfillment and the **hope** of the resurrection. All many churches have is a cold Easter morning with bunny rabbits and painted eggs. The teaching of the power of a risen Savior promising “many brethren” eternal life is obscured.

This bizarre and totally man-made calendar calculation has absolutely no biblical foundation. It leads to a very disjointed and unnecessarily confusing turn of events. It becomes a liturgical mess because it widens the perception that the traditions of Torah, which Jesus followed, have no relevance to today’s Believers. This decision makes me so angry!

OY, it makes me angry. The simple truth of God’s plan is made harder to grasp because of some church edict. Ugh.

I do want to point out that our brothers and sister in the Eastern Church traditions will maintain Biblical accuracy and will not be celebrating Resurrection until April 27 this year.

Again it’s really simple to understand the mechanics of the problem. Passover is late this year because of the leap month. The church’s celebration of Easter is wildly early because of the timing of the spring equinox, and the early council decision to divorce the celebration from its biblical moorings.

While it’s easy to understand, it’s still a disservice to the Word and to the actual chronology of events. More importantly it’s a disservice to people who hunger for truth and understanding.

### Passover Seders

As a result of this “mishugenah” calendar situation, I will be doing a lot of Passover Seders around the Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia area early this spring. If you can I would love to see you attend one of these “Passovers, the Communion Connection” events. A copy of my speaking schedule is at the end of this newsletter. Just contact the local host and make a reservation. I promise not to rage on about the calendar too much, but rather will focus on how Yeshua came to fulfill the Scripture and how our celebration of the Eucharist came right out of the Last Supper the last Seder. We will see Jesus in the Passover!

So that's why I was angry because of man fiddling with the feasts of the Lord' and messing them up!

### A Treasure, Who Will Be Missed

Why am I saddened? Our dear friend, and the spiritual matriarch of our whole clan, went on to Glory on Saturday, February 9. Dora Smith, who led both Diane and me to Yeshua, passed peacefully at about 10:30 PM. How do I know it was a peaceful transition? By God's grace and hand both Diane and I, along with her older daughter Suzie, were privileged to be at her bedside when she died.

Dora had been a most faithful friend to our whole family for over 32 years. I met her when she had just returned from the first international convention on the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem. By her own account she had an unstoppable mandate from God to share Messiah with me. I did everything I could to keep from hearing her, but ultimately her amazing perseverance and steadfastness bore much fruit. Her life witness was genuine in word and deed.

We will never forget the Yom Kippur service when she brought us to Beth Messiah Congregation in Rockville Maryland. Manny Brotman preached on the atonement and the blood. It was on The Day of Atonement in 1976 that Diane and I entered the Kingdom.

One of the things Diane and I remembered about her was the many times she invited our young and boisterous family over for the best meal of spaghetti and salad, or for her famous beef and barley soup.

Dora lived 92 years on this earth, but her legacy goes on to three generations. Favor Zion is a ministry birthed by her prayers and intercession.

So, while we rejoice in our Spirits that she is with Yeshua, we will miss her sorely, today and in the days ahead. She provided wise council, prayer and a Godly example.

I pray for you like Dora prayed for me that you be continually blessed by the resurrection presence of Yeshua,

Rabbi Ted

PS. Hopefully you can attend one of the Seders, or if not, use the list on the reverse page for prayer. I am very thankful for your prayers and support, especially at this season.

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All donations sent to TIKKUN International, P. O. Box 2997, Gaithersburg MD 20886, and will be utilized as determined by the Tikkun Board of Directors.

## Rabbi Ted Simon's 2008 Seder Schedule

Saturday	March 8	Timonium, MD Mays Chapel UM	(Pastor) Doug Hayes 443 319 5883 Contact person: Beth Oliver 410-252-9420
Thursday	March 13	Liberty MD	(Pastor) Ken King 240-626-9702
Saturday	March 15	Baltimore	(Pastor) Ken Patterson 410- 371- 2326
Wednesday	March 19	Martinsburg, WV	(Pastor) Don Cherry
Thursday	March 20	DC area –Northern VA St. Ridings Church	(Rev) Andrew McGinley
Sunday	April 27	Frederick, MD Salvation Army	(Major) Ray Pruitt