

CHAIM TIMES

The Newsletter of CHAIM, "Christians Announcing Israel's Messiah"

P.O. Box 133
Glenside, PA 19038
(215) 576-7325



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www.chaim.org
chaim@chaim.org

SHARING MESSIAH THROUGH PASSOVER

We're often asked: "How can I share Jesus with my Jewish friends?" Jewish holidays provide an excellent opportunity. *Pesach*, or Passover, the Jewish feast commemorating the liberation from Egypt, is celebrated during the last few days of March or during April. *Pesach* initiates the week-long Feast of Unleavened Bread during which nothing containing leaven, yeast, is eaten. (Passover begins the evening of April 12 this year.)

Pesach is celebrated primarily in the home. In an observant Jewish home, careful and thorough spring cleaning is carried out weeks prior to the holiday. Special dishes and cooking utensils are brought out from storage. Everything used must be absolutely pure and leaven-free. All leaven, which is symbolic of man's evil inclination, must be removed from the house or isolated and temporarily sold to a non-Jewish friend so that, technically, no leaven is possessed. The night before *Pesach*, the final search for leaven is conducted by the head of the household. A candle, wooden spoon, feather, and an old cloth napkin or bag are used to seek out and remove the leavened bread which has been conspicuously placed for the express purpose of discovery and removal. The proclamation is then made, "Now I have rid my house of leaven." The leaven is taken and burned.

The Passover *Seder* is conducted in the evening, which is the beginning of the first day of Passover. (In orthodox homes, a second *Seder* is held on the second day of the feast.) The *Seder* meal is a joyful, yet solemn feast occurring in the midst of a family religious service. The meal is eaten while leaning on a pillow to symbolize resting in redemption. Ritual washings precede the meal. *Seder* means "order of service." During this service, a special book called the *Haggadah* is used. *Haggadah* means "the telling forth" or "narrative." It contains the biblical story of the Passover and, also, many traditional explanations and embellishments. The celebrants are to think of themselves as having been at the original Exodus.

The *Seder plate* occupies the most prominent place on the table. It holds a number of important symbolic items. *Maror*, or ground bitter herbs (usually horseradish) represent the bitterness of the slavery in Egypt, as does the *Hazaret* or the whole root of bitter herbs. *Karpas*, usually parsley, symbolic of "life", is dipped into salt water, representing tears, the sorrow of life. *Charoset*, a mixture of chopped apples, nuts, honey and wine, represents mortar the Israelites used when slaves to Pharaoh. The rabbis say that even the bitterest work is made sweet by the promise of redemption. The roast egg, or *Chaggigah*, represents the sacrifices offered in the Temple which have

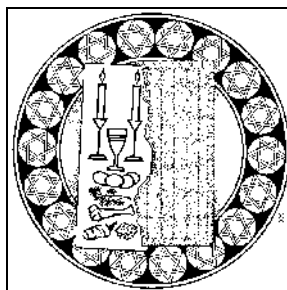
ceased. The shank bone of a lamb, or *Zeroah*, represents the Passover lamb itself. Four cups of wine are drunk by each person during the *Seder*, and, of course, *matza*, or unleavened bread, is eaten. A special place is set in hope that Elijah, the forerunner of the Messiah, will join the feast. Traditional non-symbolic foods include gefilte fish, matza-ball soup, candied carrots, roast meat, and macaroons. Usually no lamb is eaten because there is no Temple. The last thing eaten is the *Afikomen*, a piece of matza hidden, then retrieved, by a child. The *Afikomen* symbolizes the Passover lamb.

In the book of Exodus, we find a description of the first Passover. God delivered Israel from bondage and brought them to the promised land. He brought ten plagues on Egypt, the last being the killing of all the firstborn. Moses told the people to sacrifice the Passover lamb and put the blood on the sides and tops of their doors. Only through the lamb's blood would they be spared judgement.

Passover is extremely significant for New Covenant believers! Jesus is the ultimate Passover lamb. Faith in him causes the judgement of eternal death to "pass over" us. He brings freedom from the bondage of sin and leads us into His kingdom. The setting of the Lord's Supper was the Passover *Seder*. Jesus proclaimed himself the ultimate Passover lamb, represented by the matza and the Passover wine. He brought the New Covenant redemption through his sacrifice for sin and resurrection.

WITNESSING SUGGESTIONS:

1. Read Ex. 3-12; Dt. 16:1-8; Isaiah 53; Jer. 31:31-34; John 1:29; Matt. 26:17-30; Luke 22:7-23; I Cor. 10:14-22; and I Cor. 5:6-8.
2. Ask your Jewish friends what their families do for Passover. (Maybe you'll be invited!) Ask your friends what Passover means to them. Be prepared to give a testimony of how Jesus is the Passover lamb and how important this holiday is to you.
3. Attend or have your own Passover *Seder* celebrating Jesus as the Passover lamb. Encourage your church to recognize the Passover setting of the Lord's Supper. CHAIM has conducted educational and evangelistic Seders for churches all over the United States. Perhaps next year we can do one for your church. We also have a Passover Haggadah and a Seder Preparation guide online for download.
4. Send a Passover greeting card to your Jewish friends.
5. Check your calendar for the date each year and realize it starts the night before.



CHAIM Ministry Updates —Rev. Fred Klett

KABBALAH EXPOSE

I've been studying Jewish mysticism, known as Kabbalah, for several years now. Don't worry! It is not because I think it will help me spiritually. Rather it is for the purpose of understanding more about Judaism and the growing popularity of Jewish mystical tradition. It is making inroads into popular culture as well as the Russian speaking Jewish community. Recently I was part of a "think-tank" conference in California sponsored by CWIPP, Christian Witness to a Pagan Planet, which was founded by Dr. Peter Jones of Westminster Seminary in California (www.cwipp.org). While there, I also spoke on this topic in several churches and recorded two radio programs that can be heard online at www.haventoday.org/archives.php. Copies of the program can also be ordered from Haven Today. Pray for me as I study this area and as we consider how to use this in an evangelistic way. There are many Russian-speaking Jewish people interested in this, and we are considering having a program which contrasts Kabbalah and the New Covenant Faith. We will probably do an entire newsletter article on Kabbalah very soon. **There is now an article online that gives a critique of Rabbinic views of God, the views of Jewish philosophical rationalism and Jewish mysticism (Kabbalah), on our website in the articles section.**

ROCK OF ISRAEL

We are very involved with this fledgling Presbyterian congregation among Russian and American Jews and Central Asians. As this is a mission church, we are not supported by Rock of Israel congregation—it is the other way around! Rock of Israel is not self sustaining, as it is small and most of the attendees are immigrants.

WE NEED FUNDING TO ADVERTISE OUTREACH PROGRAMS SUCH AS OUR UPCOMING PASSOVER DINNER. FOR \$75 YOU CAN SPONSOR AN AD IN ONE OF THE MANY RUSSIAN NEWSPAPERS. SEND A GIFT TO CHAIM DESIGNATED FOR THIS PROJECT IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HELP. THE MORE ADS THE BETTER!



Kitchen "cut-ups" Linda and Rick Anderson & Jeff and Trudy Pomerantz of Stratford (NJ) OPC helped with Rock of Israel's outreach to Central Asians at a special dinner for their New Year's celebration known as "Navrooz." Though we focus on Russian and English speaking Jewish people, we also reach out to Russian-speaking Muslims. There were about 120 people there, so the congregation doubled in size for this event!

We depend upon God's people to support our ministry. We currently need funding for special outreach projects, computer upgrades and office help. Please pray about helping. You can donate on our web site using Paypal Thanks!

STREET MINISTRY

Pray for this ongoing effort. It is a challenge and hard work, but we do have chances to share and we do make contact with new people this way. Pray for fruit to come from this evangelistic effort. If you are inclined to join us, there will be opportunities to work with us this summer. Contact the CHAIM office for more information.

UPDATE ON BOARD CHAIRMAN REV. BRUCE HOWES

We have asked for prayer for Bruce Howes, our board chairman on and off for several years now. It was wonderful to see him at our recent meeting. He looked great and has again gone into remission. He has been battling lymphoma for many years, and there have been many ups and downs. We are extremely thankful that God has seen fit to grant Bruce more time in His service! Continue to pray for Rev. Howes and for his family as he battles cancer. We love and appreciate you, Bruce!



Here are some of the folks at Rock of Israel during the holiday of Purim, the Feast of Esther. It is traditional to use noise makers called *groggers* to boo Haman.

Pray for the Lord to work deeply in the heart of a very troubled person from a Jewish background we have tried to help. Pray for the power of God's Spirit to perform a deep work of grace in this person's life.

Please pray for the son of a Jewish Christian mother to return from his prodigal wandering and for the whole family to be able to wisely deal with the situation.

A volunteer with our ministry has requested prayer for struggles with anxiety and depression. Please pray for wisdom as to the extent that this may be a physical-chemical problem and for the correct diagnosis and treatment. We appreciate this good friend and greatly value the help given!