



**Passover begins
on the evening of
Wednesday, April 8, 2009.**

Blessings in the Lamb who was slain,

A Time to Die

"To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die..." (Ecclesiastes 3:1-2) Although most of us would nod in assent to these verses from the Book of Ecclesiastes, when someone close to us dies, it always seems **too soon**. Death has robbed us of someone we loved. We experience a tearing in our heart. This sad reality became ours recently with the loss of Jonathan Cregar, Tante Rose's husband, on February 16, 2009. We had returned the night before at midnight from a week's vacation and our 38th wedding anniversary celebration. Before we left, we felt that the Lord had shown us that we really needed to get away for some rest and recreation, because at our return we would experience the most intense six months ever of our ministry. We had no idea that this would include the passing of a dear friend and ministry colleague. Jonathan was the rabbi in charge of Senior Ministry at our congregation. He was greatly loved and had become a father/grandfather figure for many people. He also led the weekly Torah service each Shabbat. A few weeks before his sudden death, we had videotaped that portion of the service to be used in **every** new Jewish Jewels television program. Jonathan will appear in each program. God knew! Your prayers for Rose Price-Cregar, aka Tante Rose from the Jewish Jewels television program, are coveted at this time. Jonathan was to Rose, as his name in Hebrew indicates, a "gift of God."

What Happens After Death?

It seems as if we just finished mourning our dear friend and Jewish Jewels staff member, Rona Frost. Neil has performed funeral after funeral in the past few months. God is gathering lilies (Song of Songs 6:2). He is never caught by surprise when our loved ones die. We may be, but He never is. We mourn, and this is right. But we do not mourn as those who have no hope, *"For if we believe that Yeshua died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus [Yeshua]"* (1 Thessalonians 4:14).

We are often asked "where" our loved ones are who have died? Are they in the ground? Are they in Heaven? What about the verses in 1 Thessalonians, chapter 4, that tell us that the Messiah is going to return with a shout, the voice of an archangel and the shofar sound causing the dead in Messiah to rise up and meet Him in the air? Is that when they get their new heavenly bodies? What about the verse in 2 Corinthians 5:8 that indicates that when we are absent from the body, we are present with the Lord? We think the answer lies in the word "sleep." Throughout the Holy Scriptures death is likened to sleep. When you sleep, are you aware of time passing? Many times when we travel by plane, we fall asleep before takeoff and wake up thousands of miles away in another city. Death for our believing loved ones is like that. One moment they will leave earth. The next, they will be in Heaven with the Lord. That is our comfort. The gift of eternal life cancels out death as a gruesome finality. Death's stinger has been removed: *"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality...then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?'"* (1 Corinthians 15:53-55).

Keriah, Kaddish, Shiva, Unveiling and Yahrzeit

While these terms are very familiar to Jews of all branches of Judaism, those of you who are not born of Jewish parents may never have heard of them. *Keriah* refers to the tearing of garments which is done at a Jewish funeral by the closest relatives of the deceased. This rending of garments is based on Jacob's reaction to hearing that his son, Joseph, had been killed by a wild beast. In recent times this has evolved into wearing a black ribbon that is torn by the officiating rabbi. The ribbon symbolizes the garment of the mourner. Neil performed this ritual for Tante Rose and her family.

Kaddish is the traditional mourner's prayer said at the death of a loved one, beginning at the graveside and extending throughout the first year of mourning. *Kaddish* is also said each year on the anniversary of the death of someone close. *Kaddish* is not a prayer for the dead as some have thought. Rather, it is an expression of faith on the part of the mourner that, even in the midst of great grief, God is a great God, the Righteous Judge, who is worthy of praise. The *Kaddish* has been called "an echo of the Book of Job" since Job said, "*Though He [God] slay me, yet will I trust in Him...*" (Job 13:15). The *Kaddish* begins with the words, "*Yit-ga-dal ve-yit-ka-dash she-mei ra-ba*" ("Magnified and glorified is His great name..."). The *Kaddish* prayer was said at Rabbi Jonathan's graveside.

Shiva ("seven" in Hebrew) is the initial period of mourning for a Jewish person who has died. It is actually based on Amos 8:10 which speaks of feasts (which used to last seven days) being turned into mourning, and Genesis 50:10 where we read that Joseph mourned for his father, Jacob, for seven days.

The *Shiva*, usually held in the home of the deceased, traditionally begins with a meal prepared by friends or neighbors. This meal is called *Seudat Havra'ah*, "Meal of Condolence" or "Meal of Healing." This first meal usually includes eggs or lentils—round foods which symbolize eternity. For seven days, friends and relatives stay with or visit mourners in the home of the deceased. They bring food, listen with compassion, and reminisce about the good qualities that endeared the deceased to them. Their presence brings comfort. It has been found through research that the traditional Jewish way of observing seven days of mourning is perhaps the most humane and effective way of helping others at their time of great loss.

Twelve months after the death of a traditional Jew, the tombstone over their grave is "unveiled." Neil has officiated at many unveilings. The most recent on February 22, 2009, was for our precious Pearl Newman, who "happened" to come to Jewish Jewels one day, was invited to Temple, met her Messiah at age 91, pushed us to include closed captioning on our TV programs so that she could hear us, and went to be with her Messiah in February of 2008. As we gathered at Pearl's graveside, Neil spoke about Pearl's newfound faith, and read some traditional Jewish prayers. Jamie explained what the Bible had to say about Heaven and gates of pearl, and Pearl's pre-believing Jewish daughter (a lawyer) requested that Neil read Psalm 23, Pearl's favorite. We spoke about the reality of Heaven to the small group of believers and predominantly secular Jewish people who were gathered there. Lord willing, **truth** was unveiled at the Star of David cemetery that day!

Yahrzeit is the observance of the anniversary of a death. In traditional Jewish homes, a special *Yahrzeit* candle is lit, usually for twenty-four hours, in remembrance of the loved one who died. Jamie's mother died on January 10th. Three years later, our youngest son Jesse was born on the same day. We usually light a special candle in remembrance of Mother on Jesse's birthday each year—a way of honoring her memory.

It is interesting to note that at the Last Passover, right before His death, Yeshua instructed His talmidim to remember His death. He instituted what has come to be known as "The Lord's Supper" in which unleavened bread represents His body, and the fruit of the vine, His blood.

"...The Lord Jesus [Yeshua] on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.' For as often as

you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes." (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

Yeshua never told us to remember His birth. He told us to remember His death. In fact, for about the first one hundred years following Yeshua's death, the early believers remembered the Messiah's death **once a year**, on the **anniversary of His death**—at Passover. This remembrance, *zicaron*, in Hebrew, was, in essence, a *Yahrzeit*! Today, as Messianic believers, we can remember the Lord's death as often as we like, as led by the Holy Spirit. His death meant our life. His resurrection from the dead meant our hope of eternal life. *"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Messiah died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."* (Romans 5:8-10)

What Happens Without Yeshua?

Traditional Jews have **no assurance** of eternal life in Heaven with a loving God. They hope. They pray. Many secular Jews don't even believe in life after death. In South Florida, many Jewish people are even opting for cremation (due to finances), even though it has traditionally been alien to Judaism due to the belief that the natural fulfillment of "dust returns to dust" includes burial in the earth. Simple caskets made of wood are preferred since a wood coffin permits the body to decompose naturally. Jews traditionally bury their dead as soon as possible after death, ideally within twenty-four hours. One reason for this is that embalming is not usually practiced. There are other reasons as well, having to do with respect for the human body, and the soul of the deceased.

In Orthodox Jewish tradition (**Orthodox**—not Secular, Reform, etc.), a human being is equated with a Torah scroll. Just as the scroll is treated with reverence both while it is in use and when it is no longer in use, so should the human being be treated when his or her life is over. Jewish burial societies used to be the norm in Jewish communities around the world. The Hebrew word for this is *Chevra Kadisha*—literally "Holy Society." The *Chevra Kadisha* still exists today, especially in Israel, and is composed of mostly volunteers who consecrate themselves to the holy task of preparing the dead for burial.

A *shomer* (watcher) stays with the body and recites Psalms, while the other members of the *Chevra Kadisha* wash the body and dress it as prescribed by Jewish law. This ministry to the dead is considered a final act of kindness, and is based on a traditional teaching that the time between death and burial is a period of pain, suffering and confusion for the immortal soul within the mortal body. The ministry to the body of the deceased (called *taharah*) is supposed to ease the pain of transition from this life to the next. It is believed by most Orthodox Jews that there is a tortuous purification process for the soul to go back to its creator (depending on how good a life the person lived on earth). The *Chevra Kadisha* tries to make the process less painful.

We Messianic Jews do not believe this! The *B'rit Hadasha* makes it very clear that, for believers in Yeshua the Messiah, mortality will be swallowed up by life. *"Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord."* (2 Corinthians 5:5-8)

Notice the words: Spirit, guarantee, faith and confident (twice). We as believers in Yeshua the Messiah have already passed from death to life! Our Lord assured us of this: *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life"* (John 5:24). The Holy Spirit (the *Ruach HaKodesh*) on the inside of us is the token of our eternal inheritance. We receive the Spirit by faith when we receive the Messiah as atonement for our sin. His blood cleanses us. As we continue to abide in Him and His Word, we are washed and sanctified. When we fall short, as we all do, and sin, we have forgiveness available to us through sincere repentance. *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness."* (1 John 1:9)

How wonderful that in Yeshua we can say both now, at the point of death, and even in the transition from death to burial, "It is well with my soul."

Where Will "You" Spend Eternity?

All die. Jew and non-Jew alike. According to the Holy Scriptures, there is life after this one, since man is made in the image of God which is eternal. The question is: Where will you spend eternity? The *Tanach* tells us in Daniel 12:2, "*And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.*"

The truth concerning hope for one's eternal destiny is found in the PASSOVER. Israel's deliverance from Egypt was contingent upon their obedience to God's command to sacrifice unblemished lambs and apply their blood by faith to the doors of their homes. When they did this, God promised that the Angel of Death would pass over their homes (Exodus 12:1-13). Yeshua's first introduction to His people was as "...*The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*" (John 1:29). Yeshua was sent by God to solve the world's sin problem which entered through Adam in the Garden of Eden, and like a cancer, has affected every human being since. We all sin, and sin separates us from God. When we apply Messiah's blood, by faith, to the lintels and doorposts of our heart, death passes over us and we are reconnected with God, our Father. The Book of Hebrews tells us that the Law was a shadow of the good things to come. The blood of the Passover lambs in the Torah was followed by the blood of the animal sacrifices performed in the Tabernacle and then the Temple, until it was destroyed in 70 A.D. Blood sacrifices for sin have always been God's way. Yeshua was the final sacrifice for sin. When we repent of our sin, receive His forgiveness, and make a sincere decision to follow The Lamb in newness of life, we are redeemed, set free, with the guarantee of eternal life living inside of us (the *Ruach HaKodesh*). Our risen Messiah proclaims to us victoriously: "...*Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and Death*" (Revelation 1:17-18).

Love in Messiah, Our Passover,

Neil & Jamie
Ps. 90:12

*Have you applied the blood
to the doorposts of your heart?
Repent of your sin, invite Yeshua
to be your Messiah, and you
will know for sure that Heaven
is your eternal home! Acts 2:38*

Jewish Jewels Television Airtime Schedule - April 2009

LOCAL TV STATIONS

STATE:	CITY:	STATIONS:	AIRTIME:
AK	North Pole	KJNP TV 4	TUE 6:00 PM
FL	Tampa/St. Pete.	WCLF TV 22	SUN 2:30 PM
FL	Orlando/Cocoa	WTGL TV 45	SUN 1:30 PM
FL	Miami/Ft. Laud.	WHFT TV 45	THU 11:30 AM
FL	Tallahassee	WVUP TV 45	SUN 1:30 PM
FL	West Palm Beach	WFGC TV 61	SAT 10:30 PM
GA	Columbus	WYBU TV 16	SUN 2:30 PM
IA	Dubuque	KFXB TV 40	SUN 1:30 PM
IL	Chicago	WJYS TV 62	MON 1:00 PM
IL	Peoria	FAITH ALIVE CH 20	FRI 6:00 PM
MO	New Bloomfield	KNLJ TV 25	SUN 1:30 PM
NJ/NY	NJ/New York	WMBC TV 63	SUN 4:00 PM
OH	Columbus	GTN TV 23	SUN 2:30 PM
OR	Portland	K26GJ TV 26	SUN 12:00 PM
OR	Salem	K21GX TV 21	SUN 12:00 PM
SC	Greenville	WGGS TV 16	FRI 10:30 AM

SATELLITE NETWORKS

DirectTV

World Harvest TV (WHT) - SUN 3:00 PM (EST) [Ch. 367]
WMBC - SUN 4:00 PM (EST) [Ch. 63 or 900]
 Christian Television Network (CTN) - SUN 2:30 PM (EST) [Ch. 376]

Dish Network

Christian Television Network (CTN) - SUN 2:30 PM (EST)
[Ch. 267 & 9399]

God TV - The GOD Channel

WED 4:30 AM (GMT) & 6:30 AM (Jerusalem)

Insight Digital Cable: GTN

SUN 2:30 PM (EST) [Ch. 283]

Digital Satellite Receiver

World Harvest TV (WHT) - C-Band - Galaxy 16 -
 Transponder 15 - 99° W - SUN 3:00 PM (EST)

INTERNET

View our program on the web for **FREE** at:
www.jewishjewels.org

