



Passover
Blessings
from our house
to yours!

Shalom in the Lamb!

A Lamb for a Household

As we celebrate the Passover this year on the night of April 16, 2003, we recall the command given by God to His people in Egypt: *"a lamb for a household."* (Ex. 12:3) A "household" included from 10-20 people. This explains why Exodus 12:4 says *"and if the household is too small..."* It is interesting to note that God works in family units. He desires entire households to be saved. Although salvation is ultimately an individual assent of the heart, each one of us is part of a "bigger picture" in the eyes of God. The Jewish people have long recognized this. Their corporate "we" has bound them together as a people throughout the centuries. The term "House of Israel" referred to the entire nation as if they were one big family or *mishpachah*.

The Church today is supposed to be the "Household of Faith." The inclusive "we" is what the Messiah was referring to the night before His death, following His final Passover Seder on earth *"...that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You..."* (John 17:21) One household. One family. The family of God.

Blood on the House

If God told you today to put blood on the doorposts and lintel of your house, would you be quick to obey? Suppose your house was brand new or freshly painted? Sometimes the Lord asks us to do things that don't make sense to us, but obeying may mean saving our lives and the lives of our loved ones. Such was the case in Egypt, the "house of bondage." When the God of Israel saw the blood on a house, He "passed over" that home and the destroyer did not touch it. Inside each house, God's children were partaking of a sacrificial meal. They ate a paschal lamb with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

While the lamb's blood on the outside protected them from death, the lamb's flesh on the inside (as they ate it) strengthened them. God's people ate the entire lamb. It was served whole. No bone was broken (Exodus 12:46). The Scriptures tell us that the Israelites who partook of the lamb were themselves made whole: *"He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes."* (Psalm 105:37) All who left Egypt were strong and healthy. That's the power of the blood on the outside and the lamb on the inside of a home.

House in Hebrew

As we began working on one of the three new *Jewish Jewels* programs to be produced in our

home on April 24, 2003 (we covet your prayers!), the Holy Spirit seemed to redirect our research. The program began as "Daily Life in Bible Times" and ended up as "Houses." We kept finding so many interesting jewels about houses that we decided to dedicate an entire program to this topic. On-location footage in Israel for "Houses" includes a cave home in Nazareth which is considered to be very representative of the home that Yeshua would have grown up in. Another house is a typical wealthy man's home from Bible times in Katzrin, in the Golan Heights. Our audience will be able to walk through this house with us. There will be modern homes in Israel in the "House" program, as well as our house in Ft. Lauderdale.

The Hebrew word for house is *Bayit*

It is pronounced BAY-eet with the accent on the BAY. When the expression "house of" is used in English, the word in Hebrew is *Beit* (pronounced BAIT) or sometimes *Beth* or *Bet*. So, for example, *Beit- Lechem* (Bethlehem) is literally the House of Bread and *Beit-El* (Bethel) is the House of God.

The house was, and still is, basic to human life. What happened within each home was of utmost importance to the Hebrews. The phrase *Shalom Bayit* or "a peaceful home" continues to be a core family value in traditional Judaism. The Jewish home was to be one in which each member obeyed the scriptural command to "*seek peace and pursue it*" (Psalm 34:14). The ancient rabbis warned about conflict and strife within the home: "Anger in the home is like worms in grain." (Talmud Sotah 3b)

We all know that it is usually easier to manifest shalom outside the house than inside. We take liberties with those closest to us, say things to them, act in ways that we wouldn't dream of doing to others outside the family. This need not be the case for believers in the Messiah Yeshua. We have The Lamb on the inside. The solution to our anger, our fleshly inclinations, our critical spirit, and lack of patience and self-control, is on the inside. Through the indwelling Holy Spirit we can overcome our sinful tendencies. We can apply the blood of the Lamb afresh each day to the lintel and doorposts of our hearts and receive cleansing and forgiveness. We no longer live in the "house of bondage." For Messiah, our Passover, has been sacrificed for us (I Corinthians 5:7)! May we determine as King David did in Psalm 101:3: "*I will walk within **my house** with a perfect heart.*"

Houses in Bible Times

The houses we live in today are mansions compared with the houses of Yeshua's day. According to Jewish historical writings, a small house was 9 feet long by 12 feet wide. A large house was 12 feet long by 15 wide. Most houses had only one room and were built of mud bricks or rough stones. The walls were very thick to keep the houses cool in summer and warm in winter. There was usually one little window in the house, high up in the wall. The single door to the house was locked at night with a bar placed across it. The house was lit by an oil lamp, placed on a shelf or a pot turned upside down.

Most houses had two levels. The lower level had a floor made of stamped-down earth. Animals stayed here at night, cooking was also done on this level. The upper area was a raised platform where the family would eat their meals and sleep. The roof of the house was flat and was made of wooden branches laid across thick wooden beams. After it rained, the roof had to be flattened down again with a roller. We saw one of these rollers at the restored Biblical village in Katzrin.

Roofs were a special part of a Biblical home. Outside stairs usually led up the roof where the

family slept on hot summer nights, dried their grain and fruit, stored some of their harvest and prayed. A special law, found in Deuteronomy 22:8, specified that there had to be a low wall surrounding the edge of the roof to prevent people from falling off. A common custom of the time was passing from roof to roof of adjoining houses. (We're sure boys loved to do this!) The rabbis called this "the road of the roofs."

The House Upon the Rock

The word "house" in Scripture also refers to the life that a person is building. In Isaiah 66:1 we read: "*Thus says the Lord: Heaven is My Throne, and earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest?*" Walter L. Wilson in his book **A Dictionary of Bible Types** comments on Isaiah 66:1 as follows: "This is a type of building which the Lord expects each believer to construct in his life for the glory of God and the blessing of men. This house must have a right foundation, Jesus Christ (Yeshua Ha Mashiach): a heating plant to keep the heart and soul on fire for God; a kitchen so that the food may be prepared for the soul; a library for the education and instruction of the mind; a music room to keep the heart singing; a parlor for hospitality; a bedroom for rest; a bathroom for cleansing; an attic for storage; and also the light of the Word and the water of the Spirit."

This same concept of a house built on a solid foundation is seen in one of Yeshua's *mashalim* or parables (Matthew 7:24). Yeshua said, "*Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock...*" A life that stands the test of time and eternity is a life of obedience to the living, eternal Word of God. If we turn a deaf ear to the commandments of the Lord, our life is like a house built on the sand. Living in South Florida, we can assure you that this is not the wise choice. Houses built on sand get washed away.

Beit Yeshua

Joseph Stallings in his book **Rediscovering Passover** presents a concept that is new to us, and worthy of consideration. According to the author, Yeshua's followers as a group would have been called *Beit Yeshua* and as such constituted a legal extended family and legitimate "household" under the requirement of Exodus 12:3,4.

Stallings maintains that Yeshua's disciples included the 120 that were later in the upper room on Shavuot. Citing such references as Acts 1:22, the author makes a case for the 120 being with Yeshua at the last Passover seder. Disciples of a typical school were expected to celebrate the Passover with their rabbi (teacher and master) and, according to the Law of Moses, bring their wives and children as well.

The author identifies Yeshua as the shepherd, the teacher and overseer of His *bayit* (house, school). The twelve apostles were the elders who assisted in the care and keeping of the rest of the disciples. Could it be possible that the Last Supper was a large gathering rather than the small, intimate one we have always assumed? What about the exclusion of women and children? They certainly were very much a part of the first Passover. We wanted to give you some food for thought!

We are God's House!

Jacob dreamed of a ladder that reached to heaven with angels ascending and descending on it. He called the place *Beit-El*. God spoke to Jacob in that place, promising him and his

descendants a great blessing. Jacob, trembling with the realization of the reality of the living God said: *"How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!"* (Genesis 28:17)

Jacob experienced God's presence on the outside. As New Covenant believers, we experience God's awesome presence on the inside. We become the "house" of God when we receive Yeshua His son as our Messiah! Our body becomes the temple of His Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit). Yeshua, who had no house of His own, no place to call "home" as He traveled throughout the Land of Israel with His *talmidim*, finally finds a place to live in **US**! The image of the Messiah standing at the door of a house and knocking, desiring to come in and have communion with us, is a picture of that reality!

Our house (our body) is a temporary dwelling for Yeshua (like a sukkah). He dwells in us by His Spirit, looking forward to the day when we will dwell with Him in another house (His Father's house) in Heaven. Until then *"...we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens... For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened..."* (2 Corinthians 5:1,2,4)

While we are at home in this body (house), we are absent from the Lord. One day we will trade this earthen vessel, this earthly house with its leaks and cracks and defects for a perfect, glorified body. Then we will really know the meaning of "house beautiful." We will be a breathtaking house, dwelling in a glorious heavenly abode. Even more wonderful than that, we will finally be HOME.

Praying for the Lord to richly bless YOUR HOUSE with SHALOM SHALOM!

Love in The Lamb,

Neil and Jamie

P.S. We still need sponsors for the 3 new programs "Houses," "Sephardic Jewry," and "Fitness." Please call 1-800-2 YESHUA for information.