



# Passover Power

By R. Baruch, PhD

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Recently, I spoke with a leader of a congregation who was not very familiar with Passover. He was the spiritual leader who was responsible for a few hundred people and I was going to be speaking at his congregation. The subject came up on what I would be sharing. I had been invited through a mutual friend and this leader graciously and kindly agreed to allow me to teach. When I responded that since Passover was approaching I was going to be teaching about this festival, I could tell that he was not very enthused. He even said to me, "Do you have something else that would be more relevant for the people?"

When I answered that Yeshua is our Passover Lamb according to Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:7, he said he knew this verse, but did not understand what Paul meant by this statement. Sadly, this Pastor is not alone. Many believers do not know the significant connection between Messiah's work when He came the first time and the Spring Biblical Festivals. When I shared with him that Yeshua died on the Cross on preparation day, which is another term for Passover, I could tell that he started to become more interested. He remarked, "Perhaps it was for me that you were led to share about Passover." After the two sessions from 2 Chronicles chapter 30, both he and his congregation were much more interested in Passover. What I would like to do in this article is to share a few of the points which I taught that evening.

Hebrew is a very special language and in 2 Chronicles chapter 30, King Hezekiah is mentioned in verse 1. However, his name is spelled differently יחזקיהו instead of חזקיהו, as an extra letter is added to the beginning of his name. This extra letter, the Hebrew yod, is a marking relating to the future tense. Therefore, his name change is to inform the reader that this chapter has implications for the future. One of the primary messages of this chapter is unity. King Hezekiah invited the Northern kingdom, called Israel, to come to His Southern kingdom, Judah, to celebrate Passover in Jerusalem. Such an invitation would have been quite controversial, as those in the Northern kingdom were taught to worship in their kingdom at either Dan or Beit El and that there was no need to go to Jerusalem. Nevertheless, King Hezekiah sent letters to all of Israel (both kingdoms) from Dan to Beer Sheva to come and do the Passover in Jerusalem. The reader is told that Passover had not been kept according to what is written in the Law of Moses for a very long time (See 2 Chronicles 30:5 כִּי לֹא לָרַב עָשׂוּ (כְּכַתוּב). With this invitation to come to Jerusalem to observe the Passover properly, King Hezekiah instructed everyone to repent to the L-rd G-d of Avraham, Yitzach, and Israel.

Whenever the Patriarchs are mentioned in the Scriptures, the reader should understand that what made the Patriarchs pleasing to G-d and what caused them to

act faithfully were the covenantal promises of G-d. In other words, King Hezekiah wanted the people to get right with the L-rd so that the promises of G-d would be experienced by them. It is most significant that the Assyrian Exile is mentioned and the fact that the people had been rebellious and prideful in the past. This is what caused all the desolation that the people were still experiencing even at this time (see 2 Chronicles 30:7). What King Hezekiah was offering the people was a chance to experience a spiritual change in their situation and a removal of G-d's anger and to become a recipient of His mercy (see 2 Chronicles 30:9).

The heralds went forth with the invitations to come to Jerusalem in order to keep the Passover and although initially there was mocking of such a thought, soon thereafter, people began to submit to the commandment of the king (see 2 Chronicles 30:11) - אָרְ- אַנְשִׁים מֵאֲשֶׁר וּמִנְּשָׂה וּמִזְבְּלוֹן נִכְנְעוּ וַיָּבֹאוּ לִירוּשָׁלַם. It was as a result of this submissive act that G-d gave the people one heart to do the commandment of the king (see 2 Chronicles 30:12). Whereas at the end of verse 3, the people did not assemble in Jerusalem in the first month, now as a response of the king and the leaders in Jerusalem deciding to invite the people in the second month for the **Second Passover** (see Numbers 9:10-11), a great multitude עַם-רַב לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת-חַג הַמִּצּוֹת בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשֵּׁנִי קָהָל came to Jerusalem to observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This revival brought about spiritual renewal and the various places of idolatry which were in Judah were destroyed (see 2 Chronicles 30:14).

Many of the Priests and Levites were not prepared spiritually and were ceremonially unclean, but when they saw this great multitude, they sanctified themselves so they could serve and offer up the Passover sacrifices for the people. Those who had at first not taken part and were also ceremonially unclean wanted to participate, and although there was no time for them to sanctify themselves to make the Passover offering, they did so anyway. This was against the Law of Moses, but King Hezekiah prayed to G-d to forgive them and his prayer was received (see 2 Chronicles 30:18-20). What is finally emphasized in this chapter is the great joy that was experienced by the people because they obeyed the commandments of G-d. In fact, the joy and gladness were so great that all the congregation took counsel together and decided to celebrate the Festival an additional seven days, for a total of 14 days.

It is clear in the Scriptures that Israel is called to be a light to the nations and influence them spiritually to observe the word of G-d. It was as a result of the great joy that came from the Jewish people in doing the word of G-d that the reader is told that the Gentiles who were dwelling in Israel and Judah also responded and joined the great multitude and there was a great gladness in Jerusalem (see 2 Chronicles 30:25-26). The chapter ends with the Priests blessing the people (see 2 Chronicles 30:27).

It is important for the reader to understand the progression of events that took place in this chapter and realize that this does not have to be a one time experience, but every time G-d's people submit to His word there will be a mighty response from Him

to the people. Although there is no Temple in Jerusalem to go to and observe the Passover and Yeshua, He is our true Passover sacrifice. There is still much wisdom in studying about the Feast of Unleavened Bread and all the instructions that surround this very important period. It is proper to sanctify Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread and worship G-d, acknowledging the message of this Biblical Holiday. One is not able to keep this Festival according to the letter of the Law of Moses today; but we, in the newness of the Spirit, can deepen our redemptive relationship with our G-d through remembering the Passover sacrifice that His Son became for us.