

Salvation by Family

This weeks reading is for Pesach / Passover (*Shemot / Exodus 12:21-51*). Passover is a very significant point in Israel's history since this was the turning point in the Torah when God brought Israel out of Egypt. According to the Torah, the Passover is commanded to be observed throughout the generations of God's people. (*Shemot / Exodus 12:14 'Now this day will be a memorial to you, and you shall celebrate it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations you are to celebrate it as a permanent ordinance. NASB*) According to the Apostolic accounts (*Matthew 26:17, Mark 14:12, Luke 22:7, and John 19:14*) Yeshua observed the command to remember the Pesach meal on the 14th of Nisan. Pesach is a very joyful biblical holiday since it marks the deliverance of God's people!

In the opening verses from the reading for this week, the MT states in *Shemot / Exodus 12:21*, כֹּה וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה לְכָל-זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם, וְשַׁחֲטוּ הַפֶּסַח: *12:21 Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, 'Go and take for yourselves lambs according to your families, and slay the Passover lamb. (NASB)* The Hebrew text states "take for yourselves lambs according to your families." (וַיִּקְחֻ לָּכֶם צֹאן לְמִשְׁפַּחְתֵּיכֶם) The key and significant point to observe is how this verse is written saying the מִשְׁפַּחְתֵּיכֶם families are to take a lamb as apposed to the individual taking a lamb to be slaughtered.

ספר שמות פרק יב *Shemot / Exodus 12:21-23*

כֹּה וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה לְכָל-זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם מִשְׁכּוֹ וַיִּקְחֻ לָּכֶם צֹאן לְמִשְׁפַּחְתֵּיכֶם וְשַׁחֲטוּ טוֹ הַפֶּסַח: כֹּב וּלְקַחְתֶּם אֲגֻדַּת אֲזוּב וּטְבַלְתֶּם בַּדָּם אֲשֶׁר-בַּסֶּף וְהִגַּעְתֶּם אֶל-הַמִּשְׁקוּף וְאֶל-שְׁתֵּי הַמְּזוּזוֹת מִן-הַדָּם אֲשֶׁר בַּסֶּף וְאַתֶּם לֹא תֵצְאוּ אִישׁ מִפֶּתַח-בֵּיתוֹ עַד-בֹּקֶר:

12:21 Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, 'Go and take for yourselves lambs according to your families, and slay the Passover lamb. 12:22 'You shall take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood which is in the basin, and apply some of the blood that is in the basin to the lintel and the two doorposts; and none of you shall go outside the door of his house until morning. (NASB)

In the Torah reading for this week, Moshe writes specifically that the מְשֻׁפָּחֹת (families) are to take a lamb rather than directing the individual to take the lamb for slaughter. This is very significant. Can you think of the reason why? The reason may be related to the individual being contained within the family; the family (מְשֻׁפָּחֹת) is a composition of individuals. The deliverance from the destroyer is found within the context of family. Having a faithful family is an important part of our faith before God. This appears to be indicated in Parashat Lech Lecha when the Lord told Abram that all of the מְשֻׁפָּחֹת families of the earth would be blessed in his seed.

In Parashat Lech Lecha (*Bereshit / Genesis 12:1-17:27*) the Lord God calls on Abraham to go out from his land from his father's house, and from his people (וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-אַבְרָם לְךָ-לְךָ מֵאַרְצְךָ וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ אֵל-), (הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֶרְאֶךָ) to a land that He will show him. The Lord promises to bless Abraham and make him into a great nation (וְאָעֲשֶׂה לְךָ גְּדוֹלָה) and that those who bless him, the Lord will bless, and those who curse him, the Lord will curse (וְאִבְרַכְתָּה מְבַרְכֵיךָ וּמְקַלְלֵךָ אָאָר). In God's call on Abraham's life, we are told all the families of the earth will be blessed (וְנִבְרַכְתּוּ הָאָדָמָה). In the MT, Moshe uses the word ha'adamah (הָאָדָמָה, Earth) as opposed to ha'aretz (הָאָרֶץ), referring to the families of "the Earth" versus the families of "the Land" (Israel) will be blessed. The Scriptures say "all of the families of the ground" taking from the meaning that God created man from the dust of the earth (וַיִּצְרָר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים) in *Bereshit / Genesis 2:7*. The Targum Onkelos translates these Scriptures into Aramaic saying, all the "seed of the earth" will be blessed (וַיִּתְבָּרְכוּ בְּדִילָךְ כָּל זְרַעֵית אַרְעָא). Families are translated as the seed of the ground (adamah) to suggest God's covenant is for all who would join themselves with Israel. In the covenant the Lord God is making with Abraham, the Lord makes a promise personally with Abram, and to his descendants (Israel), and to all the world (non-Jewish peoples). Remember, in the *Talmud Bavli Avodah Zarah 2b* and in *Midrash Rabba Bamidbar Parashat 1, Part 7*, the rabbis say our Father in Heaven offered the Torah to all the nations of the earth, and Israel was the only nation who accepted it. The rabbis also conclude that God intended for all men (both Jew and non-Jew) to receive and accept His Torah and to be blessed in His

promised Messiah.

The Torah provides six places where the Lord reaffirms (confirms) His covenant with Abraham in *Bereshit / Genesis 15:18-21, 17:1-8, 18:18, 22:18, 26:4, and 28:14*.

פרשת לך ספר בראשית פרק יב פסוק ג
ג וְאֲבָרְכָה מְבָרְכֶיךָ וּמְקַלְלֶיךָ אָאֵר וְנִבְרָכוּ בְּךָ כָּל מְשֻׁפָּחֹת
הָאָדָמָה:

פרשת וירא ספר בראשית פרק יח פסוק יח
יח וְאֲבָרְהֶם הִיוּ יְהִיָּה לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל וְעֲצוּם וְנִבְרָכוּ-בוֹ כָּל גּוֹיֵי
הָאָרֶץ:

פרשת וירא ספר בראשית פרק כב פסוק יח
יח וְהִתְבָּרְכוּ בְּזֵרְעֶךָ כָּל גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ יַעֲקֹב אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי:

פרשת תולדת ספר בראשית פרק כו פסוק ד
ד וְהִרְבִּיתִי אֶת-זֵרְעֶךָ כְּכֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְנָתַתִּי לְזֵרְעֶךָ אֶת כָּל-
הָאָרֶצַת הָאֵל וְהִתְבָּרְכוּ בְּזֵרְעֶךָ כָּל גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ:

פרשת ויצא ספר בראשית פרק כח פסוק יד
יד וְהָיָה זֵרְעֶךָ כְּעֵפֶר הָאָרֶץ וּפְרָצְתָּ יָמָה וְקִדְמָה וְצַפְנָה וְנִגְבָּה
וְנִבְרָכוּ בְּךָ כָּל-מְשֻׁפָּחֹת הָאָדָמָה וּבְזֵרְעֶךָ:

Comparing these texts with *Bereshit / Genesis 12:3*, it is interesting to note the differences in the Hebrew words used when God made the covenant blessing of Abraham's seed at different times. Let's look at these differences. In *Bereshit / Genesis 12:3* it states that "*in you all the families (מְשֻׁפָּחֹת) of the earth shall be blessed,*" whereas in *Bereshit / Genesis 18:18*, the Scriptures say, "*and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed*" (וְנִבְרָכוּ-בוֹ כָּל גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ) using the word goyim. The Targum Onkelos states, "*all the peoples of the earth will be blessed*" (וְיִתְבָּרְכוּ) (בְּדִילְיָה כָּל עַמֵּי אֶרֶץ). *Bereshit /Genesis 22:18* states "*and in your de-*

scendants (וְעַצְמוֹם), in your bones) all the nations of the earth will be blessed.” *Bereshit / Genesis 26:4* states “*by your seed (בְּזַרְעֶךָ) all the nations of the earth shall be blessed*” and *Bereshit / Genesis 28:14* states that “*in you (בְּךָ) shall all the families (מְשֻׁפְּחוֹת) of the earth be blessed, even in your seed (וּבְזַרְעֶךָ).*” The significance of the change in wording from מְשֻׁפְּחוֹת (families), to גוֹיִי (nations), and עַמִּי (people) is the manner in which God is making his covenantal promise to Abraham, by incorporating a future expectation of God calling out to all of the people of the earth, all the nations, all families, whether Jewish or non-Jewish inviting everyone to this promise that God is going to bless the people in and through Abraham and his seed. Again, the interesting point about all of these things is that the individual is not mentioned, rather the context we are given, according to the Torah, is a family and nation that are described as being blessed. These Scriptures in and of themselves speak of the importance of community rather than individuality. This is emphasized in all of Scripture. God is not about “individuality,” He is about community and family. Let’s study this concept a little bit more.

Based upon the Torah text, the family is very important, in addition, the individual within the family, specifically the father of a family, is also very important. Joshua chapter 7 provides insight on this topic.

Joshua 7:1-26

7:1 But the sons of Israel acted unfaithfully in regard to the things under the ban, for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, took some of the things under the ban, therefore the anger of the Lord burned against the sons of Israel. ... 7:4 So about three thousand men from the people went up there, but they fled from the men of Ai. 7:5 The men of Ai struck down about thirty-six of their men, and pursued them from the gate as far as Shebarim and struck them down on the descent, so the hearts of the people melted and became as water. 7:6 Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the Lord until the evening, both he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads. 7:7 Joshua said, ‘Alas, O Lord God, why did You

ever bring this people over the Jordan, only to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? If only we had been willing to dwell beyond the Jordan! 7:8 'O Lord, what can I say since Israel has turned their back before their enemies? 7:9 'For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear of it, and they will surround us and cut off our name from the earth. And what will You do for Your great name?' 7:10 So the Lord said to Joshua, 'Rise up! Why is it that you have fallen on your face? 7:11 'Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. And they have even taken some of the things under the ban and have both stolen and deceived. Moreover, they have also put them among their own things. 7:12 'Therefore the sons of Israel cannot stand before their enemies; they turn their backs before their enemies, for they have become accursed. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy the things under the ban from your midst. 7:13 'Rise up! Consecrate the people and say, 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, for thus the Lord, the God of Israel, has said, 'There are things under the ban in your midst, O Israel. You cannot stand before your enemies until you have removed the things under the ban from your midst.' 7:14 'In the morning then you shall come near by your tribes. And it shall be that the tribe which the Lord takes by lot shall come near by families, and the family which the Lord takes shall come near by households, and the household which the Lord takes shall come near man by man. 7:15 'It shall be that the one who is taken with the things under the ban shall be burned with fire, he and all that belongs to him, because he has transgressed the covenant of the Lord, and because he has committed a disgraceful thing in Israel.' 7:16 So Joshua arose early in the morning and brought Israel near by tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken. 7:17 He brought the family of Judah near, and he took the family of the Zerahites; and he brought the family of the Zerahites near man by man, and Zabdi was taken. 7:18 He brought his household near

man by man; and Achan, son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, was taken. 7:19 Then Joshua said to Achan, 'My son, I implore you, give glory to the Lord, the God of Israel, and give praise to Him; and tell me now what you have done. Do not hide it from me.' 7:20 So Achan answered Joshua and said, 'Truly, I have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel, and this is what I did: 7:21 when I saw among the spoil a beautiful mantle from Shinar and two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight, then I coveted them and took them; and behold, they are concealed in the earth inside my tent with the silver underneath it.' 7:22 So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and behold, it was concealed in his tent with the silver underneath it. 7:23 They took them from inside the tent and brought them to Joshua and to all the sons of Israel, and they poured them out before the Lord. 7:24 Then Joshua and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the mantle, the bar of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent and all that belonged to him; and they brought them up to the valley of Achor. 7:25 Joshua said, 'Why have you troubled us? The Lord will trouble you this day.' And all Israel stoned them with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. 7:26 They raised over him a great heap of stones that stands to this day, and the Lord turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the valley of Achor to this day. (NASB)

According to *Joshua 7:1*, the sons of Israel acted unfaithfully in the things that were banned in the war with Ai. Because of their unfaithfulness, thirty six men died. In *Joshua 7:10*, the Lord God said that Israel had transgressed His covenant and sinned. Something very important here to take note of, God says that the men transgressed the covenant, however, the Torah does not say they are never allowed to take from the spoils of the war. The command not to take from the spoils of war was given to Joshua and then to the people. The violation of the covenant described here is

connected to someone coveting, taking, and hiding an unclean thing in his home. Coveting is a violation of God's covenant. *Joshua 7:12* states that because of their sin of violating the covenant, they have become accursed and are unable to stand before their enemies. The Lord goes on to say that they must remove the sin and the accursed thing from their midst before they will be able to stand before their enemies. God calls this "*consecrating*" (setting apart, making holy) yourself for the Lord. Do you think this is important for us today? The important teaching point that is based upon this text, is to ask yourself, "*have I been violating the covenant of God by what I have been bringing into my life?*" Examples may consist of the music you listen to, the television (images) that you allow in your house or privately in your heart and mind. The people or conversation you privately or publicly participate with. Take Rap music as an example, contains swearing, cursing, sexually explicit material that comes by way through a persons ears. Listening to and bringing these things into one's heart (see *Matthew 5:28*) causes one to break the covenant of God, does not feed the spirit, and will cause one to continually live a defeated life. If one participates in these things, breaking the covenant of God on a daily basis, is there any question why one would have trouble living a successful life in the Messiah (in Christ)? Is there any question why such a person would have trouble not objectifying women, or being abusive towards others? Obeying Torah in this case would have a significant influence in such a person's life (not to mention one's entire family), just like we read in the book of Joshua.

In addition, *Joshua 7:22-26* describes one man's sin caused the destruction of his entire family. The issue here was that Achan took these things and hid them in the floor of his tent. His entire family knew and participated in his sin. This is why Paul says if you see someone openly sinning in the ekklesia (kahal), then you are to formally remove the individual from the ekklesia (*1 Corinthians 5*). The issue at hand was the other members of the body of believers might also participate in this sin seeing that it was an acceptable practice. This would ultimately result in their destruction, just like what is said here in *Joshua 7*, and what Paul suggests in *1 Corinthians 11:30*.

According to the Torah, and in the book of Joshua, the blessing of God comes to the family, and the curses come by the way of sin and violation of the covenant. The individual can have a significant effect upon the

family. *Joshua 7* shows us that destruction may come to an entire family by the unfaithfulness of the father. It is interesting to note that by the faithfulness of the father, salvation may also come to an entire family. The Apostolic Writings has a lot to say on this topic:

John 4:50-53

4:50 Jesus said to him, 'Go; your son lives.' The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started off. 4:51 As he was now going down, his slaves met him, saying that his son was living. 4:52 So he inquired of them the hour when he began to get better. Then they said to him, 'Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.' 4:53 So the father knew that it was at that hour in which Jesus said to him, 'Your son lives'; and he himself believed and his whole household. (NASB)

Acts 11:12-18

11:12 'The Spirit told me to go with them without misgivings. These six brethren also went with me and we entered the man's house. 11:13 'And he reported to us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, and saying, 'Send to Joppa and have Simon, who is also called Peter, brought here; 11:14 and he will speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household.' 11:15 'And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as He did upon us at the beginning. 11:16 'And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' 11:17 'Therefore if God gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?' 11:18 When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, 'Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life.' (NASB)

Acts 16:27-34

16:27 When the jailer awoke and saw the prison doors opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. 16:28 But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!' 16:29 And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas, 16:30 and after he brought them out, he said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' 16:31 They said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.' 16:32 And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. 16:33 And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household. 16:34 And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household. (NASB)

Acts 18:4-10

18:4 And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. 18:5 But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul began devoting himself completely to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. 18:6 But when they resisted and blasphemed, he shook out his garments and said to them, 'Your blood be on your own heads! I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.' 18:7 Then he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God, whose house was next to the synagogue. 18:8 Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized. 18:9 And the Lord said to Paul in the night by a vision, 'Do not be afraid any longer but go on speaking and do not be silent; 18:10 for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city.' (NASB)

In each of these cases, when the father believed in Yeshua the Messiah, we read that the entire house (family) also believed and received Yeshua. It is important to note that this blessing comes in and through Abraham and his seed and specifically to the “*families*” of the earth. The ending phrase of the Hebrew text on the Blessing in *Bereshit / Genesis 12:3* suggests that the blessing to the nations is central to the coming of this seed of Abraham. According to the Hebrew text, a blessing is going to come to all of the world; the magnitude of such a blessing being for all the peoples of the earth alludes to and requires a Messianic expectation and interpretation because it is only in and through the true Messiah that such a great blessing would be able to come to everyone (to all the families of the earth).

During this Passover season, remember the joy of the Torah in the point and the purpose for the coming of Yeshua the Messiah. His purpose was for bringing the deliverance and salvation of the Lord God of Israel. The reason the Lord instituted the Passover was so that His people would always remember and proclaim their redemption from slavery. “*This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast.*” (*Shemot / Exodus 12:14*) The Passover represents our salvation and deliverance by the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. This Passover, let’s celebrate our salvation, justification, and the resurrection of Yeshua that we have in the Lamb of God (*2 Corinthians 5:21, Revelation 7:14*). As often as we eat this Passover meal remember the deliverance and salvation of God in and through His Messiah. For He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and brought us into His kingdom, where we find the forgiveness of sin, rest, and joy forever. Amen!

