

FOUR QUESTIONS

By Eitan Shishkoff



Though Passover passed by several months ago, we can always ask questions. The classic Passover Seder formula serves our purposes well. When the “four questions” are chanted by the youngest child at the table (the Sephardic tradition is for all assembled to ask the questions as a chorus), it opens the door to the wonder-filled story of our exodus from slavery. All the celebrants are exhorted to view these events “as if we ourselves were present on the night that we fled from Egypt.” May the following four questions similarly lead to your personal entry into the redemption story God is currently weaving.



I. WHAT IS A MESSIANIC JEW ?

I discovered my Jewish heritage while reading the New Testament account of the Last Supper. Before concluding that I got my wires crossed, think about the original setting of that meal. It was, in fact, the Passover Seder, the annual meal Israel was commanded by God to observe throughout their generations. For the first time I saw the “Old” and “New” Testaments as one interwoven book. I understood that living as a Jew, I would be following in the footsteps of Jesus and the apostles. They were thoroughly embedded in Israel. Yeshua, whom I had only known as Jesus, without much connection to His destiny as the King of Israel, had brought me back to a part of my family history from which I’d been cut off by assimilation.



Why is this even of value? Aren’t we all one in Messiah? Yes, we are all joyfully one in Messiah. At the same time, God’s eternal covenant with Israel is not to be set aside with the advent of her Redeemer. In Jeremiah 31:3 the Lord says **“Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love.”** We would expect Him to call His own nation into relationship with Himself as evidence of this love. When Yeshua says that He came for the lost sheep of the House of Israel there is no time limit. He indicates no endpoint to that assignment. On the contrary, He says **“You will not see me again until you [Jews in Israel] say ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord’”**



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(Matthew 23:39). He declares, **“Do not think that I came to destroy the Torah [a far better translation from the original Hebrew context than the term “law”] or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill”** (Matt 5:17).

A Messianic Jew is a modern day disciple of Yeshua who is born Jewish (of either parent according to most Messianic Jewish leaders, though some hold with the rabbinic ruling of matrilineal descent, meaning if only one's father is Jewish he/she is not Jewish. This, of course would rule out Joseph's children, Moses' children, and Ruth's children). The Messianic Jew receives Yeshua as Messiah, Redeemer, Savior and King, the Son of God, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah and inheritor of the everlasting throne of His ancestor King David. He also views the way of life given in Torah as the expression of God's continued covenant with the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

II. WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF REGATHERED ISRAEL?

When my wife and I first arrived in Israel as immigrants, nearly 20 years ago, there was no way we could have known the adventure we were in for. Considering our own flaws and foibles, there is no doubt that the hand of God is responsible for any success we have had in ministry since we arrived in Israel.

Our own aliyah represents a small part of our people's physical return to the land of Israel from long centuries of exile. This re-gathering proves that God did not break Covenant with Israel and that the Church can never replace God's ancient covenant people. **“For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince [our own government],**

without ephod or teraphim [a functioning priesthood]. Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days” (Hos. 3:4-5). The faithfulness of the God of Israel is displayed for all history. That He regathered of the Israelites who were scattered during the conquests of the Assyrians (720 BCE), the Babylonians (586 BCE) and the Romans (70 CE) proves it. In Deuteronomy 30:1-6 we learn that Israel will turn back to God while still in exile and then He will bring us back. We personally experienced this turning to the Lord - then He led us back.

The same promise is found in reverse order in Ezekiel 36:24-27. In this passage, God describes a turning back to the Lord with tender hearts after we have been restored to our land. This promise has been widely fulfilled in the thousands of new immigrants who have met Yeshua after arriving in Israel over the past 20+ years. Both promises are true. Both highlight a regathered Israel that precedes the return of Yeshua as King. He affirmed to the disciples that He would restore the kingdom of Israel, (Acts 1:6,7). He is Son, Savior and Lord, but He will return as King of Israel (Ezek. 37:24,25, 2 Sam 7).

III. WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE GENTILES?

I see Ezek. 37:9,10 as a body-wide calling: **“Prophecy to the breath... and say...Thus says the Lord God: ‘Come from the four winds, O breath and breathe on these slain that they may live.”** To prophesy to the bones is a forerunner's role. The prophetic

intercessors (Jewish and Gentile) within the body of Messiah are to carry out the ministry of Ezekiel in this regard. Other ancient prophets foresaw the role of the Gentiles at the end of the age. Isaiah envisioned all nations flowing to the mountain of the Lord's house in the latter days (Isaiah 2:2-3). In Zechariah 2:10-11 the Lord declared **“I am coming and I will dwell in your midst...Many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and they shall become my people.”**

The bond between King Solomon and King Hiram is a wonderful example of covenant friendship between Jewish and Gentile lovers of David (the foremost type of Messiah). Their friendship led to the building of the Temple in Jerusalem. What a splendid foreshadowing of today's Gentile lovers of Yeshua who are drawn by the Spirit to take part in Israel's restoration!

Finally there is the remarkable and practical list in Isaiah's 60th chapter. He begins with the announcement that the Gentiles will be drawn to the light that will dawn upon Israel at age's end. Isaiah was looking into our day when he saw: Intercessory Prayer (60:10), Financing (60:5,9), Reversal of anti-Semitism (60:14), Assisting in the Physical Return (60:8,9) and Coaching/Equipping (60:16).

IV. "WHAT'S MY PART, LORD?"

The fourth question is for each of us to ask the Lord, trusting Him to direct us and use our lives in the redemption of Israel. In a sense, without this fourth question, the rest are academic. Your life, the content of your days, makes a significant difference. So, the real question is **“What's my part? Where do you want me, Lord?”** ✨

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Our Vision:

Tents of Mercy - to participate in today's historic exodus by assisting Israel's returning exiles.

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COUNTING THE OMER IN BRAZIL

By Avishalom Tekle

I have always had the most common associations of Brazil that everyone has ~ world class football (soccer) players, colorful carnival dancers, tasty beef dishes, beautiful people, great Jazz music. My father-in-law Eitan, who traveled to Brazil numerous times, told me that I would feel right at home in this land of lovely diversity. I was excited to meet new people and see new sights but I wasn't prepared for the intensely personal experience I was about to have.

Eitan and I left for Brazil right after celebrating our community Passover Seder. We were very busy just before our departure and awaiting us was a time of intense speaking engagements during the days of Passover and the counting of the Omer. The specific season of our visit had a lot to do with the messages the Lord orchestrated for us to share to the different groups that we were going to address.

The holiday of Passover is foundational for us as a nation and for followers of Yeshua.



BBQ Brazilian style



Avi speaking at Israel Now Conference in Goyania

It parallels the path of new birth and freedom and its commemoration is God's commandment to us. First we enter through the gate of God's gracious provision for redemption through the sacrifice of His only begotten Son Yeshua. Then we begin a time of consecration and preparation for the outcome of His Promise, to be filled by His Spirit and power of Resurrection. What a meaningful message to convey, and even better to experience!

Our first meeting, coordinated by our dear friend and brother Andrey, was with two dynamic young men leading a new movement of college age students. Their ministry is committed to creating a fresh sound of worship with God's presence at its heart. I was moved to hear how this young generation gathers by the thousands to seek the face of God. Their testimonies were inspiring and moving.

As we traveled, we met other young leaders with a similar vision. One of them was Pastor Rinah. A surfer at heart, he leads a network of 80 churches throughout Brazil. The common element within his network is that every leader is also an enthusiastic athlete. We met these sportsmen and women: skaters, soccer players, surfers, bikers, motor sports enthusiasts, the list goes on. Their fellowship with one another was enviable, characterized by mutual appreciation, joyful competition and a common passion for life with Yeshua.

Pilgrimage Tourism

At every conference we attended and every church we visited there were advertisements for tours to Israel and there were many



Dancing in Cianorte



Israel Now Conference dancers

people preparing to visit Israel in the upcoming year. From 2009 to 2010 there was a 79% growth in tourism from Brazil and the numbers continue to increase. Over 55,000 Brazilian tourists come to Israel every year.

Tourism is a major source of economic blessing for Israel. However, pilgrimage tourism focused on viewing the ancient stones of archeological sites is incomplete without visiting and

fellowshipping with the living stones of Israel's Messianic community. "Righteous tourism" happens when a tourist connects with his/her past, reflects on his/her present, and affects the future through intercession and prayer. People who come to Israel need to realize the potential blessing they would both give and receive by rearranging their itinerary to include visits with the Messianic Body in Israel. As we join together in intercession there will be power! The instruction of Yeshua to His disciples to "pray in Jerusalem until you receive power" is still the way to bring revival to Israel and the nations. We shared these truths with our Brazilian brothers and sisters and they enthusiastically expressed their desire to align themselves with Israeli believers and the Land.

A Fresh Touch

My final destination in this captivating nation was Cianorte. The city of Cianorte was impressive; young, lively and modern. The conference was highly energetic and the hosts were young pastors with a hunger for the move of the Spirit. I sensed there was a message, not just for the people present, but for the city itself. I shared that I had come to bridge two gaps; between Israel and the city of Cianorte, and between sons and fathers. These two themes touched a deep nerve in the audience and God began to open afresh their hearts for Israel and the generations. Words are not enough to express what happened next, but somehow the truth of the bond between Jew and Gentile, fathers and sons opened to us God's heart for the times we are in. His visitation was powerful and glorious.

I arrived back in Israel while we were still counting the Omer. On the day before the Shavuot festival; the 49th day of counting the Omer, Tents of Mercy gathered for a time of extended worship and prayer. We assembled to focus on God's harvest that is soon to come. Now at the completion of this amazing journey, from Passover through the counting of the Omer and into the celebration of Shavuot, we are at the gate of a new season. More than ever we are eager to see the move of God's Spirit to produce a harvest of people in this land and the nations. Let the passage of Passover, the preparation of the Omer, and the promise of Shavuot move us to take our place in the harvest that has already begun. ✨



Pastor Rinah's surfboard pulpit