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QH 11.3

PASSOVER – A RESTORED RELATIONSHIP

A little girl is born and abandoned. While she was still covered in birth fluids and blood, she was carelessly tossed into an open field and left there to die. Her tiny body was lying naked and cold in a puddle of blood and no one cared. Surely she was about to die, but a man came by and saw her lying in the field. He took pity on her and took her in his arms with great compassion and tenderness. He breathed life into her tiny body and made her live.

The man watched over her as she grew and matured. He watched her learn to walk and talk. He watched her grow into that awkward stage of puberty and then young womanhood. All this time he loved her with an enduring love.

Then the time finally came when this young woman was old enough to know love. The man took the young woman and made a marriage agreement with her. He clothed her with fine embroidered silk and the best handmade leather sandals. He covered her in expensive, sparkling jewels: necklaces, bracelets, earrings, and rings all made of pure gold and silver. He placed a beautiful crown upon her head and gave her all the finest, richest food to eat. She was stunningly beautiful and perfect because of the incredible love and wealth that was bestowed upon her by her husband. But the young woman became vain because of her perfect beauty and began to have affairs. She prostituted herself with every man who would have her. She went looking for other men to commit adultery with daily and showed no shame. She took everything her loving husband had given her, all the fine clothes and jewels and wealth, and trashed it all by giving it away to her lovers.

Naturally, the woman's husband became furious. His jealousy over his adored wife's unfaithfulness led him to such intense fury that he stripped her naked of all her fine clothes and jewels. He exposed her nakedness and adulteries for everyone to see. He pronounced the sentence of death upon her, which she deserved for the acts of adultery she had committed against him.

But after his fury was spent, the woman's husband finally calmed down. He remembered the marriage agreement he had made with her and the great love with which he loved her, and his anger left him. The man reminded his wife of the marriage agreement he had made with her when she was a young girl and, though she did not deserve it, he renewed the marriage agreement with his wife and forgave her all of her offenses.

Few of us are capable of a love so great and compassionate that we could forgive such offenses as this man did. Would you call him a fool? I am sure there are many who would. If you are one who would, then you just called YHWH a fool. Does that surprise you? The story you just read is found in Ezekiel 16 and it is the story of YHWH's intense, all-consuming, never-ending love for His bride.

Another similar illustration of YHWH's all-consuming love for His bride is found in the book of Hosea. Though Hosea's wife committed great adulteries and despised the love Hosea gave her, she was greatly and tenderly loved. Even though she took many lovers and rejected her husband, Hosea showed great love and mercy towards her and forgave all her offenses. Like the adulterous wife in Ezekiel, Hosea's wife deserved death. You and I are no different. Just like the women in Ezekiel and Hosea, you and I have committed adulteries against our Husband and are deserving of death.

What a sad story it would be if the Almighty, righteous YHWH spent His fury and jealousy upon us and consumed us as we so rightly deserve. Fortunately, our story doesn't have to end in death because the greatest aspect of YHWH's love for us is His unending mercy.

From the beginning YHWH made a way for the broken relationship between Himself and His creation to be restored. "For YHWH so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..." We are all familiar with the words of John 3:16, but do we really comprehend the meaning of those words?

Our finite, human mind cannot comprehend the enormity of YHWH's love for us. We cannot imagine that YHWH values us so much that He would exchange that which was most precious to Him to ransom us from the clutches of death. Yet this is exactly what He did. In spite of the fact that we have hated Him, rejected Him, and committed adulteries against our Husband, He willingly gave up His own Son for you and me. What an incredible, unimaginable love that is!

As carnal human beings, it is our nature to reject those who reject us, to turn away from or seek revenge against those who hurt us. But YHWH is not like us. Most of us simply cannot understand that the whole purpose of YHWH's love is not to destroy us, but to bring us back into reconciliation, restoration and forgiveness. That is the ultimate meaning and purpose of Passover.

By the shedding of blood, we were reconciled back to YHWH through the death of Yehoshua (Rom.5:10). It pleased Him to reconcile us to Himself by Yehoshua, having made peace with us through his blood (Col.1:20). YHWH has reconciled us to Himself through Yehoshua, not imparting our sins to us (II Cor.5:18). Though we have rebelled against Him, mercy and forgiveness belong to YHWH (Dan.9:9). Each year, from the first Passover in Exodus 12 until the last Passover Yehoshua shared with his talmidym, YHWH reinforced the lesson of His eternal mercy and forgiveness. Each time a lamb was slain and its blood applied to the doorposts, the Israelite's hope of a restored relationship was renewed.

In Yehoshua, the final atonement for our sins has been made. When we accept the blood of Yehoshua as our sacrifice and it is applied to our heart's "doorposts", we are married to Him. Each year when we renew our marriage vows at Passover, our relationship with our Husband is restored.

Many of us know the pain of a broken relationship, of being separated from the one we love. Oh what great joy fills our hearts when we are restored to a peaceful reconciliation! How much greater should our joy be at Passover when our relationship with our true Husband is restored?

Your Husband loves you with a fierce, unconditional, everlasting love and He has written you exquisite love letters because He wants you to know that He jealously desires you for Himself and Himself alone. In His letters, He has revealed to you all the things He desperately wants to give you if you will accept the sacrifice He has made for you and be reconciled back to Him.

A restored relationship with YHWH does not come from observing a holy day in a certain prescribed way. It comes from a genuine repentance for our sins, acceptance of the sacrifice that was made for us, and loving obedience to our Husband.

Just as Passover leads us into a restored relationship with our Husband, the Days of Unleavened Bread (*Chag Hamatzot*) leads us into "oneness" with Him. Yehoshua said that he and his Father are "one." Each day as we physically take in a tiny bit of matzah, we are reminded Yehoshua is both our Passover sacrifice and our example. We are reminded that we are to be pure and holy as He is holy. That we are to become "one" with our Husband.

If we are truly "in love" with our Husband, our heart's desire will be to know Him intimately and to be "one" with Him, to love Him with all our heart and soul and might. We become "one" with YHWH by spending time with Him and walking in His commandments as He instructed us to in His Torah, His love letters to us, His bride. In becoming "one" with our Husband, we will also love our brothers and sisters around us.

As you partake of the covenant meal this Passover, think on how YHWH has rescued you from death and placed you at His marriage supper. Think about your relationship with Him as His bride and His enduring, everlasting love for you. Rejoice in being reconciled back to Him.