

TZEDAKAH TIMES



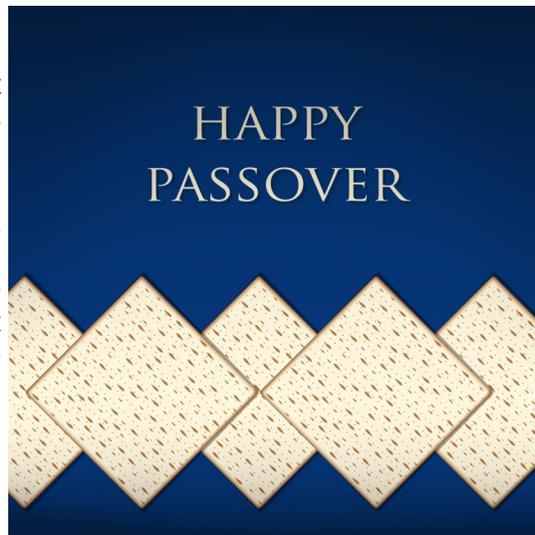
Passover 2017...

As you read this edition of *Tzedakah Times*, you will notice one major change. We have changed the look and feel of the ministry newsletter — the first time in several years. I hope you will let us know what you think of this different format/layout.

However, we have not changed the following concepts about the newsletter: (1) we will remain quarterly for the foreseeable future and (2) we will seek to always remain consistent in quality and tone. A ministry newsletter should be informational, relevant and always consistent to the focus of the ministry. And since you will be receiving this newsletter shortly before Passover and Resurrection Sunday ... let's talk about Passover!

Passover is not simply about food — brisket, gefilte fish, matzah ball soup, chicken liver. Passover is not simply about a four-hour reading of the Haggadah and arguing over who gets to look to see whether Elijah has shown up this year. The commemoration of Passover should be about remembering the liberation of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt in circa 1445 BC (FYI — I have an early date for the Exodus). The celebration of Passover should also be about remembering what Jesus did during that very special Passover in AD 29/30 for not only the Jewish people but also for all the people of the world. However, and sadly, this is not what Passover has become.

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CHURCH TO
REACH HIS
PEOPLE



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Passover (continued)



The celebration of Passover should also be about remembering what Jesus did during that very special Passover in AD 29/30 for not only the Jewish people but also for all the people of the world.



Dr. Amy Downey
Director/President
Tzedakah Ministries

Passover for the most part in the Jewish community today barely reflects the idea of liberation, commemoration, or celebration. Do you question me? Do you think I am kidding or exaggerating? Let me give you some examples.

- According to various Orthodox rabbinical groups, medical marijuana is now “kosher for Passover” (Check on the internet if you doubt)
- If one is Jewish and wants to celebrate Passover but doesn’t believe God, they can still celebrate through their own “Humanist Haggadah” — <http://www.haggadot.com/content/humanist-haggadah-passover>
- In fact, there is a Haggadah for every type of Jewish person in the world from Buddhist to the Vegans in the Jewish community — http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/04/07/new-haggadah-passover-2014_n_5104408.html

But, what is missing from the equation in the Jewish world? What is missing from the Passover tables of 99% of the Jewish community? The Passover Lamb known by the simple name of Jesus the Messiah. And this is where we must come into the picture.

We as Christians and churches must be present with the unavoidable truth that Jesus is the fulfillment of Passover. We must be there when the marijuana-laced matzah balls bring them no joy or “high.” We must be there when the atheist finally wants something and someONE to believe in. We must simply be there with the truth of Messiah Jesus.

Finally, and perhaps you are wondering why the nation of Denmark is highlighted. Tzedakah Ministries is heading to this Scandinavian land in May! I will be presenting a paper at a conference on May 11 and I covet your prayers. Shalom!



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The Power of Elijah's Cup

It feels as if I must have done at least a 100 Jesus in the Passover presentations over the last seventeen years. In other words, I must have eaten at least a pound or two of the bitter herbs called horseradish. And I can truly say that my esophagus will never be the same because of it!

However, I believe the most interesting part of the Jesus in the Passover presentation is when it comes time for me to discuss Elijah's Cup. This might seem unexpected when one considers all the components of the Passover meal — the symbolism of the different cups, the Afikommen, and the horseradish. However, Elijah's Cup represents for me the most tragic part of the whole meal.

In the traditional Jewish home, Elijah's Cup is set for the prophet based on the final prophecy of the Tanakh/Old Testament in Malachi 4:5 — Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. Therefore, every year a place at the table is set for Elijah “with the hope” that the prophet will come to tell them that the Messiah has arrived to begin the long-awaited Messianic Age.

They have waited for 2,000 years for Elijah to arrive. They waited even while traveling the Diasporas. They waited even during the dark days of the Inquisitions and the Crusades. They waited even while hiding from Nazis during the darkest days of the Holocaust.

This is the power of Elijah's Cup for it is even today on the table of the most secular of Jewish homes as a secret talisman of hope. A talisman that perhaps there is a kernel of truth to this Messiah story. And there is actual truth to the Messiah story but unbeknownst to the Jewish story, Elijah the Prophet in the form/theological type of John the Baptist arrived about 2,000 years earlier. But how can they know this hope, this message of redemption, this message of grace, this message of Elijah's Cup, unless we as Christians and churches go out and tell them today — Romans 10:14-15.



**The next day
John seeth
Jesus coming
unto him, and
saith, Behold
the Lamb of
God, which
taketh away the
sin of the
world.**

John 1:29

What's the Next Step...?

Tzedakah Ministries believes that if a ministry of Jewish evangelism is not going forward, it is going backwards. We can value the past; but, we must not focus on the past to the point that we are not forward thinking.

The above paragraph might sound like an odd thing to say coming from someone who has a PhD in Church History! And, yes, I LOVE all forms of history! However, I would even argue that the past should be utilized primarily for what it can teach us today and for tomorrow.

So ... what is the next step for Tzedakah Ministries? For I promise you **Explore Messiah...?** is just the beginning of an outreach to Millennials. Details will be ... Coming Soon!

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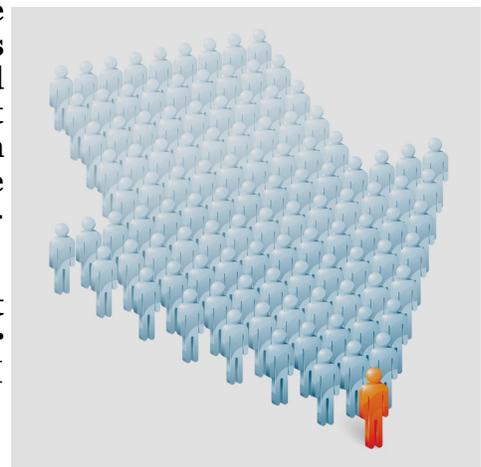
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One Single Soul...

The work of Jewish evangelism is to borrow the phrase from the Peace Corps' ad campaign (1961-1991) – “the toughest job I could ever love.” It is incredibly difficult. It is often incredibly sad. It involves long hours, tough conversations and many tears.

However, I would not and could not do anything else with my life. Why? The reality that 99% of God's Chosen People are at this moment lost and headed for an eternity apart from Jesus. The reality that Tzedakah Ministries has been called to make an eternal difference in the lives of the Jewish people even if it is just one single soul at a time. And sometimes it is just that – one single soul at a time.

Perhaps this is not glamorous. Perhaps this is not someone's idea of “fun.” But I have to tell you for Tzedakah Ministries, it is truly “the toughest job I could ever love.”



Tzedakah Times