

Passover is the beginning of the festival year. Because the festivals basically teach us how YHVH intends to bring Salvation to all mankind, it's important that we know what each festival is all about, and how each festival fits into the plan.

We could talk for hours on the different aspects of Passover - how the various stories fit it, but today – BEFORE WE CELEBRATE THE PASSOVER EVENT – I want to focus in on the nuances of some of the names and words that are used in the Passover story. By doing so, we might gain a better understanding of what YHVH is doing, and get a better “taste” of what the festival is about.

The first word, and obviously the most important – is the word ‘Passover’ itself. We find it as YHVH introduces the 10th plague to Moses -

^{NKJ} **Exodus 12:3-11** "Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth day of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household ... 5 `Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year ... 6 ... Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight ... 11 ... It is the LORD'S Passover.

In this passage, the word ‘passover’ is from the Hebrew word ‘pecach’ (פֶּעַח - 06453) which is a masculine noun. The Hebrews were to take a lamb. The lamb shall be an unblemished male of the first year – which in Hebrew thinking is less than one year old. It shall be slain at twilight, or as the Hebrew says ‘bein ha aravim’ which means ‘between the evenings’ – between noon when the sun begins to fall to the west, and sundown.

Based on the clear reading of the text, ‘it’ - the LAMB - is the Passover, and since the LAMB is the Passover, then the day that the Passover is slain is NOT the Passover, nor is the meal, or the week the Passover. The Passover is the lamb.

What makes a lamb the Passover? Simply doing everything that is described in Exodus 12:3-6. Once we understand that, we can better understand this passage –

^{NKJ} **Num 9:2-3** "Let the children of Israel keep the Passover at its appointed time. 3 "On the fourteenth day of this month, at twilight, you shall keep it at its appointed time. According to all its rites and ceremonies you shall keep it."

In this passage, the word ‘keep’ is ‘asah’ (אָשָׂה - 06453) all three times. ‘Asah’ means ‘to do, to fashion, to accomplish. In other words, everything that is required except for taking it on the tenth day, and eating it after it has been prepared, must be done on the 14th day between the evenings.

Once we understand that, a number of Passover timing questions go away. What’s more, once we see that, we can tie it into the sacrifice of Yeshua, and see – as Paul did – that –

^{NKJ} 1 Corinthians 5:7 ... indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us ...

Yeshua is the Passover victim, and as such, He had to be slain on the 14th day of the month ‘between the evenings’, just like the first Passover did.

Knowing that the ‘Passover’ refers to the lamb that was slain, why then does the scripture say that God ‘passed over’ the houses. Let’s take a look –

As YHVH continued to give Moses instructions, He said -



^{NKJ} **Exo 12:13** `Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you *are*. And when I see the blood, I will **pass over** you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy *you* when I strike the land of Egypt.

In this case, the words 'pass over' come from the Hebrew word 'pacach' (פָּחַח – 06452) which means 'to pass over, spring over, to skip, to limp'. 'Pacach' is a singular verb and the root word for 'pecach' which is the Passover victim – the lamb. Though 'pacach' is typically translated 'pass over', it more correctly means to 'spring over', to 'skip', it is also translated 'to limp' (we'll get to that later).

If we skip (pun intended) on down to verse 23, we find a few more details –

^{NKJ} **Exodus 12:23** "For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over (pacach) the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you.

Note - YHVH did not say that He would 'pass over the **house**', instead He would 'pass over the **door**'. It's as if He is closer to the ground – maybe right in front of the door! It's as if He is doing this as He anticipates where the destroyer is planning to strike next. It would appear that he is 'springing over' the houses or 'skipping from house to house'.

So YHVH went from house to house to check the doorposts, and if He saw the lamb's blood on it, He kept the destroyer from coming into that home.

Unfortunately, many people believe that if YHVH did not see it, YHVH Himself would kill the firstborn of that house. They come to that conclusion because of a passage just four verses down where YHVH is telling the fathers that when the children ask about Passover, they should say –

^{NKJ} **Exodus 12:27** "...It *is* the Passover sacrifice of the LORD, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when **He struck the Egyptians** and **delivered our households** ..."

Instead of YHVH 'striking' those homes without the blood, he '**delivered our households**' from the 'destroyer' who wanted to kill our firstborn.

Since we now see that Passover means to leap, skip, etc., let's now look at another meaning for 'pasach'.

'Pasach' has also been translated as 'halt', 'limp', and as 'lame'. During the reign of Samaria's King Ahab, God sent the prophet Elijah to show the Israelites the futility of worship the pagan gods. Upon approaching them at Mount Carmel, Elijah said –

^{KJV} **1 Kings 18:21** ... 'How long **halt** (pacach) ye between two opinions? If the LORD *be* God, follow him: but if Baal, *then* follow him.' And the people answered him not a word.

In this passage, the Hebrew word "pacach" was translated as "halt". In my opinion – the word 'halt' doesn't make much sense, so let's look at another interpretation - this time from the English Standard Version -

^{ESV} **1 Kings 18:21** And Elijah came near to all the people and said, "How long will you **go limping** (pacach) between two different opinions ...".

What the Israelites were doing during Ahab's day was simply 'jumping back and forth' between their allegiance to YHVH and their allegiance to the Canaanite gods. It's as if they were 'bouncing' from one thing to the next. The JPS Tnakh reads –

^{TNK} **1 Kings 18:21** ... "How long will you **keep hopping** (pacach) **between two opinions?**

How does 'halting' tie in with 'limping' and hopping? It's quite simple. When a person or animal walks with a limp, they generally have a foot or leg that hurts, and thus 'hop' in order to keep the weight off the



hurt leg. Their gait includes a little 'hop. Same thing with humans – when they have a hurt leg, unless they're using crutches, they tend to 'hop' a little in their walk.

So why did the KJV use the word 'halt'?

It turns out that the word "halt", besides meaning to 'stop', also means to limp or be lame. According to Etymonline.com¹, 'halt' is an adjective that means 'to be lame'. Here what it says –

halt (adj.)

"lame," in Old English *lemphalt* "limping," from Proto-Germanic **haltaz* (source also of Old Saxon, Old Frisian *halt*, Old Norse *haltr*, Old High German *halz*, Gothic *halts* "lame") The noun meaning "one who limps; the lame collectively" is from c. 1200.

This definition was used by Winston Churchill in a speech to Canadian Parliament in 1941 when he was trying to bring Canada into WW2. In describing those who can assist in the effort, he used two words - 'hale' – which in his day meant a person who is healthy, and 'halt' – one who is lame. This is what he said –

"There is a place for everyone, man and woman, old and young, hale and halt; service in a thousand forms is open. There is no room now for the dilettante, the weakling, for the shirker, or the sluggard. From the highest to the humblest tasks, all are of equal honor; all have their part to play."²

In Elijah's message to the Prophets of Baal and the Israelite people, he was simply stating to stop vacillating, stop jumping between worship of YHVH and Baal.

Sometimes King James English can lead us to draw the wrong conclusion. For example, the English word "suffer", which comes from the Greek word 'pascho' (3958) simply means "to experience" – either good or bad – it's just an experience.

Another meaning of 'pasach' is found in the Septuagint³

^{LXE} **Exodus 12:13** And the blood shall be for a sign to you on the houses in which ye are, and I will see the blood, and will **protect you** (pacach), and there shall not be on you the plague of destruction, when I smite in the land of Egypt

In this case, the phrase "protect you" is from the Greek word 'skepazo' (σκεπάσω). Though not in the KJV (and thus no Strong's number), according to wordhippo.com⁴, the word means to 'cover, muffle, clothe, screen, and other words having to do with covering or protecting.

In my opinion, this is the best translation is the word "pasach". According to the 3rd century BCE priests who translated the then Hebrew Bible into Greek, they chose this word to provide what they believed to be the correct meaning of the word 'pacach'.

With all the definitions we have so far, I think we can best understanding 'pasach' by picturing YHVH as a bird fluttering over the doors of the obedient Israelites in order to keep the destroyer from getting through their doors. We can see examples of this in the writings of the prophets -

¹ <https://www.etymonline.com/word/halt>

² **Speech to the Canadian Parliament, Winston Churchill, December 30, 1941**

³ The Septuagint (LXX) is a Greek translation of the known Hebrew 'Bible' as of the 3rd century BCE.

⁴ <https://www.wordhippo.com/what-is/the-meaning-of/greek-word-12d31deaecb929dec3497e28fb7789775dc7cf8a.html>



^{NKJ} **Isaiah 31:5** Like birds flying about, So will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem. Defending, He will also deliver *it*; Passing over (pacach), He will preserve *it*."

Or as the English Standard Version renders it -

^{ESV} **Isaiah 31:5** ^aLike birds hovering, so the LORD of hosts will protect Jerusalem; he will protect and deliver it; he will spare and rescue it."

This thought was also presented by Moses in his last words to the people of Israel -

^{NKJ} **Deu 32:9-11** For the LORD'S portion *is* His people; Jacob *is* the place of His inheritance. ¹⁰ "He found him in a desert land and in the wasteland, a howling wilderness; He encircled him, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. ¹¹ **As an eagle stirs up its nest, Hovers over its young, Spreading out its wings, taking them up, Carrying them on its wings ...**

In review, we've seen that:

- the Passover in the sacrificial victim, the lamb that was slain.
 - It is not the day, the season, or the meal that was eaten later.
- to 'keep' the Passover is to fulfill the rituals that lead up to, and include the slaying of the lamb.
- When YHVH saw the lamb's blood covering the door, He hovered over it so that the destroyer could not enter the house.

Yeshua is that Passover. He is the one who hovers over us and protects us from the destroyer. He's not way up there, in the heavens. He's right here – at our door.

That's what OUR Passover is to us!

Shalom Aleichem