

# The Parallel Paradigms<sup>1</sup> of Pesach<sup>2</sup> Et Purim<sup>3</sup>

In each of our lives there are defining moments when we find ourselves faced with a predicament of unimaginable magnitude. In the midst of circumstances that are so completely out of our control that it seems as though hell itself is bent on our destruction. The Biblical feasts of Passover and Purim present powerful, yet practical parallel paradigms of the providential purpose that G-d has eternally prepared to preserve us for our prophetic destiny. Passover and Purim portray G-d protecting us from power-mad predators while fulfilling His promise to our patriarchs and their progeny. In this hyper-skeptical age of computer-generated special effects, psychobabble, and information overload we all can humbly learn from these ancient epochs of divine intervention that G-d is still a very present help in our time of trouble (Psalm 46:1). He is the same compassionate deliverer for us today as He was for Israel in days of old (Hebrews 13:8).

Passover and Purim have a unique inter-relationship in their juxtaposition to each other. On one hand they are as different as night and day in that Passover is first of the *major* feasts of the L-RD and one of three pilgrimage festivals cited in Exodus 34:18-24. While Purim is a *minor* feast, that does not carry a negative consequence for failing to observe it and it is the very last feast to be celebrated in the Jewish calendar year. Yet, both Purim and Passover have common paradigms meant to teach us the same profound, life changing lessons. The combined revelation of these two feasts can re-energize our faith, empowering us to confidently face catastrophic circumstances that will not only challenge the depth of our spirituality, but will shake us to the very core of our reliance upon G-d and the trustworthiness of His eternal Word.

Passover is the first of the seven major biblical feasts of the L-RD found in Leviticus 23:1-44 and is celebrated on the fourteenth day of Aviv<sup>4</sup> or Nissan<sup>5</sup>, the first month of the biblical Jewish calendar. It is interesting to find that the symbol for this month among the constellations of the Mazzaroth<sup>6</sup> is *the Lamb*, being that Y'shua (Jesus) the Messiah is revealed in scripture as *the Lamb of G-d* who takes away the sins of the world! The dramatic story leading up to and including Passover is told in Exodus, chapters 1-14.

The roots of Passover can be found in Genesis 15 when G-d made a covenant with Abram and revealed to him the future of his descendants living in affliction and servitude in a strange land for 430 years. He further disclosed that He would judge that nation (Egypt) for abusing His covenant people and bring the Israelites out of their captivity with great wealth. They would have to languish in bondage until the iniquity of the Amorite's had reached its full measure (Genesis 15:13-16). He intended to take Israel, a nation of simple slaves to exact His justice upon an utterly immoral people guilty of giving their sons & daughters as burnt offerings to Chemosh, the national idol they worshipped. In Numbers 21:21-32, we find the account of Israel trying to pass peacefully through the land of the Amorite's until they were attacked by them and subsequently totally annihilated.

Purim reveals the same paradigms within the tapestry of its incredible story found in the Book of Esther, which never mentions G-d once. Yet His omnipotent power and omniscient knowledge are as clearly apparent as the catastrophic calamity that the Jews found themselves in over and over again. The book of Esther is a must read. It contains all the ingredients of a classic movie epic. It chronicles the events of

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<sup>1</sup> Paradigms – (Pair'-a-dimes) = Examples or patterns of truth that guide and shape our thinking and our actions.

<sup>2</sup> Pesach – (Pay'-sock) Hebrew = Passover commemorates the miraculous deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt.

<sup>3</sup> Purim – (Poor'-reem) *Persian* = Commemorates the deliverance of the Jews on the day of their planned destruction.

<sup>4</sup> Aviv – (Ah'-veev) *Hebrew* = Spring. The first month in the biblical Hebrew calendar, that marks the beginning of spring.

<sup>5</sup> Nissan – (Neese'-on) *Assyrian* - Another name for the Hebrew calendar month Aviv.

<sup>6</sup> Mazzarot – (Mahz-a-wrote') *Hebrew* = The Hebrew Zodiac. G-d made the stars to declare His glory (Psalm 19:1-4).

those Jews that were carried away into exile by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, and they were now living under the rule of Ahasuerus, king of the Medes and Persians, who conquered the Babylonians.

Throughout the book of Esther we can clearly see the fingerprints of the hand of G-d moving behind the scenes to manifest deliverance for His covenant people. This can be seen from the banishment of Queen Vashti to the selection of Esther as the new queen. And continues from Mordecai uncovering the plot to kill the king to the exaltation of Haman and his plot to annihilate the Jews. From Mordecai's refusal to bow to Haman, to the king commanding Haman to honor Mordecai before all the people of Susa. From Mordecai challenging Esther to risk her life to save her people, to the surprise turn of events that hung Haman on the gallows built for Mordecai and enabled the Jewish people to defend themselves and vanquish their enemies. Over and over we see G-d working in the daily affairs of ordinary people to bring about miraculous intervention from a cataclysmic crisis that demanded their total surrender and reliance upon G-d.

### **The Purpose Paradigm**

This brings us to the first of the paradigms or life lessons that can be learned from Passover and Purim: *Our life has **purpose** in the eternal plan of G-d. G-d is absolutely Sovereign concerning all the events in each of our lives. He puts us where He wants us when He wants to, without revealing why He wants us there!* Proverbs 3:5-6 instructs us to: "Trust in the L-RD with all your heart and lean not to your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths." G-d does not take any joy in our suffering. **His** overriding **purpose** in each moment of our life *is always* to conform us to the image and likeness of His Son, Y'shua (Jesus) the Messiah. That is what Romans 8:28 means, when it says, "All things work together for the good of those that love G-d and are called according to **His purpose.**"

Each of us that have surrendered our lives to G-d will inevitably find ourselves *in a fix that G-d has fixed to finally fix us*. This phrase colorfully portrays the paradigm G-d employs to engender spiritual maturity in anyone that has bowed their knee to Y'shua (Jesus) as L-RD and have committed themselves to be His *talmideem* (disciples). In each event of our daily lives G-d is targeting the common enemy within us, namely *our old man, the carnal mind, or the flesh*, to be crucified with Messiah so that His life may be seen in us. The *final fix* is to be crucified with Y'shua so that we may be resurrected with Him too.

### **The "Present Yourselves" Paradigm**

*Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to G-d in Messiah Jesus our L-RD. Do not yield the members of your body as instruments of unrighteousness to sin. But **present yourselves to G-d as being alive from the dead and the members of your body as instruments of righteousness to G-d.** Romans 6:6, 11, & 13*

*For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. The carnal mind is at war with G-d; for it is not subject to the law of G-d and is unable to be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please G-d. But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of G-d dwells in you. If you do not have the Spirit of Messiah, you are not His. And if Messiah is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is alive because of righteousness. If you live according to the flesh you will die you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. **For as many as are led by the Spirit of G-d, these are the mature sons and daughters of G-d.** Romans 8:5-10 & 13-14*

*Since Messiah suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for those who have suffered in the flesh have ceased from sin. **To the end that we no longer should live the rest of our life for the lusts of the flesh, but for the will of G-d.** 1 Peter 4:1-2*

### **The Permission Paradigm**

If we want our lives to bring honor and glory to G-d in the same way that Moses & Mordecai did, we must daily **yield** to His sovereign authority, trusting the leading of His Spirit through His written Word and by communion with Him in prayer and worship. Yielding is giving G-d permission to use our lives as instruments of His eternal kingdom purposes. Will we go where He leads and will we do what He asks? No matter how challenging it may be to our own ideas, our likes or dislikes, to our comfort and convenience? Will we choose to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him (Mark 8:34)? To sum it up, will we give the King of the Universe **permission** to be our L-RD and Master?

### **The Persistence Paradigm**

The Feasts of Passover and Purim clearly demonstrate the paradigm of **persistence**. It appears that every breakthrough in the history of G-d's dealings with His people has required not just faith, but faithfulness or persistence to see the fulfillment of the promises of G-d. Internationally respected bible teachers Bob Mumford and John Hagee have taught three simple points that explain how the paradigm of persistence works in a way that helps make them easy to remember.

1. *Promise* – G-d loves His people and makes wonderful promises to us that we can totally rely on.
2. *Problem* – G-d takes us through difficulty to reveal where our heart is, what are we trusting in.
3. *Provision* – G-d provides our need, as we trust Him (His promise) to get us through the problem.

*“Will not G-d bring about justice for His chosen ones, who cry out to Him day and night? Will He keep putting them off? I tell you, He will see that they get justice and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find **persistent** faith on the earth?” Luke 18:7*

### **The Persecution Paradigm**

The last paradigm and definitely not the least, is the paradigm of persecution. Most of us who live in the western world, in free societies that allow religious freedom, know very little about persecution. Not that I am wishing it on any of us, yet I have seen in the lives of those who have endured persecution, the clearest expression of the likeness of Messiah. It has been my honor and privilege to meet Corrie Ten Boom and Richard Wurmbrand, both of whom have gone to their much-deserved heavenly reward. These two saints exemplify the rich spiritual rewards that result from suffering for our faith with trust in the sovereign goodness of G-d. When we respond to persecution with an attitude of trust that enables us to give praise to G-d, it testifies to the overwhelming reality of G-d's love and the awesome power of His grace in our lives. Rabbi Saul, later known as the Apostle Paul, lived with suffering and persecution as a regular part of his daily life and learned to use it for G-d to make him spiritual dynamite for the kingdom of G-d.

*“I have been in prison often and have frequently been severely flogged. I have been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jewish leaders thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, and once I was stoned and left for dead. Three times I have been shipwrecked, once spending a day and a night in the open sea. I have been constantly on the move, in danger from rivers and from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from the Gentiles; in danger in the city, in the country, at sea, and from false brethren. I have labored and toiled and gone without sleep; I have*

*known hunger and thirst, and have been cold and naked. Along with all of this, I daily face the pressure of concern for all the congregations that I have started.” 2 Corinthians 11:23b-28*

In 2 Corinthians 12, The Apostle Paul describes how G-d responded to his pleas for deliverance from all of this demonically inspired persecution and how he learned to rejoice in the midst of difficulty and distress. He learned to use it as an opportunity to overcome by the blood of the Lamb, the word of his testimony, and by not loving his life unto death (Revelation 12:10).

*“To keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassingly great revelations I have received, there was given to me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Hasatan, sent to torment me. Three times I besought the L-RD to take it away from me. But He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you. My power that strengthens you is perfected in your weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that the power of Messiah may rest upon me. That is why for the sake of Messiah, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, and in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” 2 Corinthians 12:7-10*

*“You, however know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings – what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the L-RD rescued me from all of them. In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Messiah Y’shua (Jesus) will suffer persecution.” 2 Timothy 3:10-12*

As we look over the vast testimony of scripture at all the people who have been called and chosen by G-d to reveal His glory in the earth, we see a repetitive pattern of the paradigm of persecution. Many times there was miraculous deliverance for G-d’s people. Others He supernaturally sustained through their ordeal, bringing them home to their eternal reward as martyrs honored for their faith (Hebrews 11:1-39). The common thread that we must grasp and hold onto deep within us, is the awareness that we will be persecuted for our faith while confidently knowing that G-d is in control!

I am reminded of Tevya<sup>7</sup>, who after a small pogrom<sup>8</sup> that rudely disrupted his oldest daughter’s wedding reception, questioned G-d about the burden of being *the Chosen people*. Why couldn’t He *choose* somebody else for awhile? If we desire to fulfill G-d’s ultimate purpose for our lives, one of the major life lessons we will learn is *because we are precious to G-d, we are putrid to Hasatan, our adversary, the devil*. We must come to understand the evil spiritual dynamics that is behind the pernicious perspective of prejudice or we will naively think that politics and diplomacy can eventually solve the world’s problems and bring about a utopian society. No such luck. The prophet Jeremiah warned us, “our heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it? (Jeremiah 17:9)”

There is coming a day when there will be no more sorrow or suffering, no more hatred and wars. Until that day we will keep learning the lessons or *paradigms of purpose, present ourselves, permission, persistence, and persecution*. As you celebrate the feasts of Passover and Purim, try to remember these themes and may G-d bless you and bring you further along in your pilgrimage through these paradigms.

*The day of the L-RD will come like a thief in the night. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything*

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<sup>7</sup>Tevya was a poor Russian Jewish dairy farmer who loved to question G-d about the inequities of his life. He is the main character in Sholom Aleichem’s popular folk tales, which became the movie, “Fiddler On The Roof.”

<sup>8</sup> Pogrom – (Pah-grahm’) *Russian* – an organized riot or massacre officially sanctioned by Czarist Russia to persecute Jews.

*will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of G-d and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the fervent heat. But in keeping with His promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the dwelling place of righteousness.” 2 Peter 3:10-13*

